CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XLIV NO. 36. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1916. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS

TED HAMILTON

Down With His Ship

:-: Or, :-:

The White Creeper

By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER I.

THE big man in the rough gray suit passed along near the line of wharves with an analytical eye turned toward the waterside. He saw vessels alongside the wharves, a few of which were scenes of idleness, while, in the case of others, cargoes were being stowed or discharged, and stevedores and associate workers were busy at their duties. On the whole, it was an active place, for it was the center of San Francisco's shipping industry, and commerce was not then lagging.

He noted everything with a professional acumen hard to excel, the ships and their condition, the goods going about and the men who handled them. He saw jaunty craft and run-down neighbors that looked so hulk-like that they almost seemed to depend upon their head-fasts to hold them up from a plunge below, and it was the survey of an expert in full sense, but he did not pause.

Continuing his way, he turned a little aside, and finally brought up at an old wooden building with a time-worn sign that proclaimed it a ship-chandler's place of business.

Entering, he saw a great room that was liberally filled with canvas, ropes, anchors and barrels of tar, together with the manifold additional articles dealt in by a chandler.

At one side a squat-built man who seemed to be mostly shoulders and red beard was bending over a time-worn desk and figuring on paper with a stubby pencil. The newcomer smiled amusedly.

"Ahoy, Captain Josh!" he called heartily.

The other man wheeled and his face brightened in a way that suggested a bleak sky suddenly touched by sunshine.

"Captain Joe, by thunder!" he exclaimed.

He scrambled to his feet with difficulty and advanced with a pronounced limp, due to a partly crippled leg. When he limped it was no small matter to look at, but this never troubled his optimistic temper. The sunshine of him was not all in his smile.

The two shook hands effusively, exchanging greetings with hearty good will, and seeming like friendly bulldogs in amicable association. They had long been friends, and both in their day had been shipmasters, but were now retired, or supposed to be.

Captain Josh had ended his career afloat suddenly when he fell down the companionway of the ship Nip o' the Sea in a squall and lamed himself for life, after which he abandoned the water and opened a store for supplies that had prospered well. Captain Joe had retired only two years before the present meeting. Lifelong friends, they had remained intimates without a break.

Five minutes passed and then Captain Joe waved the newspaper he held in his right hand.

"Read the sea news this morning?" he asked brusquely.

"Meaning the wreck of the four-master Andrew C. Wing?"

"Just that."

"She's gone to the bottom, cargo and all, and the underwriters are hit a bit hard, but no lives lost. Cap'n Perkins knew how to manage her when he had to desert her. Sailor-men and ship's papers all saved."

"He was the last man to leave her deck as she trembled for her last plunge."

"Of course."

"When you were skipper of the Joan of Arc and she was cut down by that thundering idiot of a coaster you were also the last man away."

The ship-chandler looked at his friend in wonder.

"Why, sure," he returned. "What else could I be doing?"

Captain Joe leaned forward and tapped the knee of the chandler with his newspaper.

"What," he asked, "would you say of a captain who abandoned his ship while others were still on board?"

Captain Josh blinked in a puzzled way. For two old sea-dogs to discuss such a point seemed to him like an argument as to whether day was really day or night. He detected something in his visitor's manner that he could not understand. Then he suddenly brightened up.

"Oh! so there's been another case of that sort, has there? I hadn't heard of it. Was he a 'Frisco skipper? If so, I'll help to lynch the cur if you will give me pointers."

"We agree, then, that a captain should be the last to leave his ship when she has to be abandoned in a sinking condition, and that the skipper who leaves her deck before all hands are safe is a coward and an offense to the nostrils of decent men?"

"He's too mean a cur to lumber up the earth with his worthless hulk. But see here, Cap'n Joe, what are you driving at? We agree on that point, and all men agree with us. You know that. We've never argued the point, but it hasn't been necessary. The ethics of the sea demand that the captain be the last man to leave the sinking ship. There now, I've been clear, tho why I should say all this puzzles me. Why explain what all men know?"

From under his shaggy brows the chandler peered in wonder from his little eyes.

"What skipper has gone wrong now?" he added.

"Joseph Hardy."

"Eh, what? Joking the old man, are you? You are the only Joe Hardy on the coast, and you retired two years ago. Just lost a ship, have you? Hum! Joking the old man!"

The caller was quiet, and he looked at his friend with steady eyes, but the air of something afoot was still upon him.

"What," he asked, "was my last ship?"

"The Riding Brave."

"What became of her?"

"Lost hard by the Starvation Reefs. Run upon an uncharted, submerged rock between the Starvation twins, in a foggy night. Stove a hole in her keel shaped like a mast. Filled fast and had to be abandoned in a hurry. Sunk right away. Well insured."

"What was I doing while she was settling for the bottom of the sea?"

"All hands had escaped in the boats, and all were saved. You were the last man to leave her deck."

"I was among the first!"

"Wha—at?" gasped the chandler.

He still clung to the belief that it was all a poor joke, but he knew his friend so well that he was troubled. Captain Hardy could joke when the mood was upon him, but it was always with good taste. Nothing like this was in the chandler's memory. He had grown agitated, but his companion, always a masterful man, was calm and strong of face.

"I was master of the full-rigger Riding Brave," he said steadily, "and she was wrecked as you say. The night was calm and every man should have been saved, but only one boat was ever reported, that being the one I was in. It is to be supposed that all the rest of the hands went down with the ship."

"That was not the belief at the time, and the owners sent a schooner to hunt for them. It was finally decided that they were butchered by hostile natives."

"Possibly that is so, but I think they were unable to get away in their boat in time. I think they went down with the Brave."

Captain Josh stared and said nothing.

"We carried no passengers," Hardy resumed, "and two boats would easily accommodate our hands. I don't know about boat two, for, you see, I left my men to live or die, and myself hurried away in the first boat that was lowered."

"This is a mighty poor joke——"

"Wait, Josh! I'm telling you the truth, and it's the first time it ever has been told. I turned coward and deserted my ship and my men. Instead of being the last to leave I was among the first. I was a black coward. The sailors who were with me in the boat agreed to say we were the last to get away, and I let them tell it so. That statement has stood for two years, but it's a lie!"

The chandler looked hard, but he was speechless.

"There is a slight excuse for me," Hardy proceeded calmly. "At the time of the accident I was in bed, sick with a fever that had come upon me. Cyrus Brayden, my mate, was really in command. I am not shifting the blame for the accident upon him, for nobody was to blame for that. Who could avoid a submerged, uncharted rock? What I do claim is that the fever was upon me, and my head was bad. Good judgment was not with me. When in my normal condition I would not be a coward, but my head——"

He paused, sighed and resumed less forcefully.

"I have called myself a coward. Possibly I was not that. I did not fall into a panic, but entered the first boat composedly, and without a thought that I was doing wrong. We pulled away, lying on our oars some fathoms off. The fog was thick, but one of the men finally announced that he had seen the Riding Brave sink, so we pulled away. Thirty-six hours later we were picked up by the sloop General Nash. We had agreed on our yarn, and we all said we were the last boat away. Really, we were the first."

Another pause, brief but impressive.

"I deserted my ship while men were still aboard!"

The chandler wriggled uneasily in his chair.

"You say your head was bad?"

"Fever in my blood."

"Then how do you know you were first away?"

"I was clear-headed enough to know that. You see, an unnatural calm was upon me. I could see and think, but my judgment was blunted. I saw the men on deck when I went down the ladder to the boat."

"Mate, I can't believe all this!" exclaimed Captain Josh.

"I wish there was room for your doubts, but there isn't. You've heard grim facts. Josh, I've been thinking of this for two years, and it has been simply inferno for me. By the time I reached land it was, of course, too late to change what happened, so I let my pride master me, and have hid the hideous truth, but—oh! man, the thoughts that I've had, the sleepless nights!"

A deep sound gurgled up from the captain's throat that was like a great sob, and his face twitched painfully.

"A coward!" he groaned.

The chandler squirmed in his chair and his eyes filled with tears.

"I can't believe——"

"You can't help believing."

Hardy suddenly straightened in his seat and all weakness disappeared. "Altho it isn't necessary, I'll remind you of a part of the ethics of the sea, Josh. First, if there's a wreck, the skipper must be the last away. Secondly, if all can't get away, it's his duty to go down with his ship!"

"Well, some think that——"

"I do, and you do. All manly men do. To go down with his ship! Josh, if I keep on brooding over this matter I shall go crazy. I won't do that, but I'll do better. I've chartered the brigantine Shooting Light, put her in ballast, stowed provisions and what else is necessary, and shall sail Thursday for the Starvation Reefs. Once there I shall locate the wreck of the Riding Brave, for which purpose I shall take a diver and materials for dragging. She lies, I suppose, in about eight fathoms, if the navigation charts are right. Having located her I shall attach weights to my feet, and sink to my death alongside of the wreck!"

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN JOSH started violently.

"Wha-at?" he gasped.

"Yes," continued Hardy, calmly. "I failed in my duty to go down with my ship, but I can go down to her now. She shall be my grave. After I drown myself the mate will navigate the brigantine home, and the law of the sea will have been fulfilled."

"You will commit suicide?"

"I don't call it that. I shall simply perform a long-deferred duty."

"The men of your brigantine wouldn't permit it."

"Only one man will know of my intention. I have engaged for my only mate a fellow named Hiley Vilper. He is a good sailor, and can handle a ship skillfully in calm or gale, but his brain holds nothing more. He has heard of my intention with apathy, and will help me in all things, but he sees nothing in it more than common. He will fetch the Shooting Light home all right."

"You will——"

"Do my duty, and go down with my ship!"

Captain Josh exploded. Knowing that his friend meant all he said, he stormed, argued, pleaded and threatened, but Hardy was firm as a rock, and not to be turned from his purpose. At the end of an excitable half-hour there was a lull. It was Josh who broke it.

"You expect your granddaughter here from Japan soon, don't you?"

"Yes," Hardy replied, his strong face softening. "Persia, youngest child of my son who lives in Japan. I must get this over with before she comes, for it is likely she would object to what I'm to do."

"Suppose she did?"

"My plan would not be changed. Still, I had rather not endure her mental disturbance, so I sail before she reaches here."

"What will she think when she learns you are a suicide?"

"Not a suicide, Josh, but a man who does his duty. Well, I've not seen her since she was 10 years old, so her affection for me must be merely casual, and shocks fall lightly on youth. I've arranged to have her properly received by good people when she arrives, so she will be all right."

"Will you be all right?" asked the chandler, darkly.

"Yes, for the first time in two years. By that time I shall have gone down with my ship—or, rather, to my ship."

"You sail Thursday?"

"Yes."

Captain Josh reached for his pipe, crammed tobacco into it with reckless fingers, and presently had a light. He wasted no more words in argument or plea, for he knew his man. When Joseph Hardy committed himself to a purpose all the tongues of the world could not turn him from it.

The old friends had a half-hour of smoking, and then the caller rose to go. His heart was warm to Captain Josh, but he had about as much sentiment as a rock, and the ominous future he had sketched did not change his usual bluff manner.

"I'll see you again before I sail, Josh," he promised, in matter-of-fact tones.

"All right, Joe, drop in," was the cordial reply.

"So I will. Be good."

The skipper went his way, but when the door closed the chandler lost his composure. He started up, his face twitching nervously.

"Mad as a March hare!" he exclaimed. "Crazy as a loon. Lost his mental balance, poor old chap! Such a wild notion! Of course he feels bad about that matter—I should—but commit suicide! Why, he's taken leave of his senses. He shall not sail. I could talk until I was blue in the face and words would not move him, but something else will fix it. He hasn't a relation in San Francisco, and not this side of Japan; but I reckon the law will permit me to act as 'next friend.' I'll go to a judge, have him taken in charge as non compos, and duly restrained of his liberty until rest and care in a sanatorium restore the poor fellow's mind."

It was said in earnest, but as the days passed by Captain Hardy continued his preparations to sail, and there was no interruption. Late on Wednesday he dropped into the chandler's shop to say good-by, and found only the clerk.

"Captain Josh is in the hospital," explained the hired man.

"Bless my soul!" Hardy cried. "How's that?"

"Well, sir, a few minutes after you were here before he fell down the stairs yonder, struck his head against the wall, sustained a concussion of the brain, and has ever since lain unconscious. The doctors say he isn't in a bit of danger, but that it will be a week or so before he gets his senses back."

"Bless me!" the skipper repeated.

"He will pull thru. He's a robust man."

"I'll go to see him."

Hardy went, but was turned back at the hospital office. Captain Josh could not recognize anybody, and the doctors would not admit a caller. The skipper went away grieving for his friend, but he missed the most important point of all. The only man who would naturally interfere to save him from his rash purpose was insensible, and now the purpose was known only to himself and his mate, Hiley Vilper.

The next day the brigantine Shooting Light cast off from her pier, and in due time was threading the waters of the Pacific Ocean proper. Fate had not stopped Captain Joe, and he was laying a course for Starvation Reefs. On the floor of his stateroom lay the weight he had selected for tying to his ankles to sink him to his watery grave alongside of the ill-fated Riding Brave.

Besides himself and the mate the crew consisted of six men, with a Chinaman for cook and steward. These seven persons had been told that the voyage was to recover valuable documents from a sunken wreck, and the same story had been told to Roger Cooper, the young professional diver.

When the fast-going brigantine sunk the coast astern, and was still standing away briskly for her destination, there was nothing in the manner of any man to suggest that unusual plans were afoot.

The sailors were composed, because they were following their regular occupation, and the diver the same, because he had, as far as his engagement went, nothing to do but to locate the wreck when they raised the reefs. Iron-willed Joseph Hardy was his usual calm self, and Mate Vilper felt no worries.

True, he knew that his skipper was going to commit suicide, but that was Hardy's business, not his. A queer fellow was Vilper. Naturally slow of movement and mind, he carried a dull face, slouching shoulders and listless feet—a stupid man to look at when he was at leisure, but one who was a thoro sailor and capable of handling a vessel well in all weather and in all emergencies.

Hardy had selected him because he knew his odd nature well, and had made no mistake; but he was hardly the man to hold conversation with, and now, with a talkative mood on, the skipper looked critically at young Cooper.

"He's got brains," was the master's mental verdict, and he walked to where the young man was leaning on the rail.

"What," Hardy asked, "do you think of the Shooting Light?"

An attractive smile crossed the diver's bright face.

"She's got wings, sir," he replied readily.

"No lagging on her part, eh?"

"Not a bit of it, sir."

"Know much about the sea, yourself?"

"For my age, yes. I knocked the sails around as a hand before the mast from the time I was 14 until I was 20. Sailed first of all in a coaster, but later several times from California to Japan and China. Four years ago I took up diving, but I've gone many a league across the deep sea since then."

"Do you like diving better than foremast work?"

"More money in it for me, sir."

"You still feel sure you can visit the wreck?"

"No doubt of it, sir. Soundings, if correct, prove that she can't be so deep but that I can stand it under water all right, but it's only a matter of locating her by preliminary sweeping."

"Our drag will do that."

"I'll do the rest."

With this cheerful assertion Cooper again smiled, and Hardy began to like him greatly. Wholly free from the boastful, he still had a modestly confident air that was commendable.

"There is but little of the ship to be visited," the captain went on, "but I want all that is in my old stateroom there, part of it for my owners, and part—well, maybe my granddaughter would like it."

"I think, sir, you will be able to place those articles in her hands as soon as we return to San Francisco."

Hardy cleared his throat hastily. Somehow, the granddaughter he had not seen in so many years became a more vivid personality to him than ever before, and it was a wrench to his feelings to know that he would never see her. To cover up his sudden agitation he fell into family history abruptly.

WE STRONGLY recommend to readers our great new sea story, in this issue, "DOWN WITH HIS SHIP; or, THE WHITE CREEPER," by William H. Manning. You will find it the real article. Next week's leader will be a stirring romance of the South, by T. C. Harbaugh, entitled, "SERPENT AND DOVE; or, A SOUTHERN HEIRESS." Look out for it. A flock of swift-flying stories are on their way to these pages. Spread your nets and take them in.

"Her name is Persis, and she is the daughter of my son Elmer. He has been in Japan for a dozen years, doing business. The girl is about to visit San Francisco, and may be there in a fortnight or less."

"Just about in time to meet you."

"She's a fine girl, Cooper! A fine girl. I suppose she is a wonder in many ways. Her mother never allowed modern methods to prevail in rearing her, but respect for elders was a guiding feature of her childhood. That makes a fine girl, you know."

There was no visible sign of enthusiasm in Captain Joe's manner, and less in his mind. He loved the girl he had not seen for so many years, but talking of her with the deck under him and the sea casting silver wrinkles just beyond, made her seem so near and so dear that he suddenly found his plan of self-destruction unpleasant. Much rather would he live and meet Persis than go down forever to where his lost Riding Brave lay in a watery grave.

Anxious to drop the subject, he walked away to speak with Mate Vilper, and Roger was left to himself. He returned to his position by the rail and stood looking outward, deeply thoughtful. Half an hour later, when he was not conscious that anybody was especially near, a soft voice stole into his reverie.

"Making good time, sir, ain't we?"

He turned and saw a sailor he knew to be named Lem Soper, a small, wiry, flaxen-haired man with a pinched-up face that was not exactly attractive. Soper was smiling amiably now, and almost servilely.

"We're doing our day's work, all right," the diver replied.

"Great little brigantine, eh, sir?"

"Some speeder."

"We shall fetch the Starvation Reefs quickly."

"Yes."

"I hope we shall find all that the Captain wants when we get to the wreck of the Riding Brave."

"That's what we're after."

"I'll bet," said Soper, dropping his voice still lower, "that you want to succeed just as much as the skipper does. You see"—he sent a wary glance to right and left and twisted his face oddly—"you see, I know who you are!"

Roger started a little, and his eyes grew keen as he studied his companion attentively.

"Don't misunderstand me," Soper added hurriedly. "I'm a man that never interferes, and no oyster can keep a closer mouth than I can. The tales I know are never told out of school. Mate, I'm mum!"

His companion regarded him with cold dissatisfaction, tho there was some anxiety visible back of his firm expression.

"I am Roger Cooper, diver!" he said deliberately.

"I've always held," pursued the sailor placidly, "that a man has a right to call himself any name he wants to. Once I enlisted in the U. S. Navy, but I didn't like it, and I skipped. For a while I called myself Peter Mason, and I felt justified in doing it. Yes, sir, I say now that you've a right to call yourself Roger Cooper. Don't think I'm going to give you away, for I ain't. I see that you have a game of your own afoot on this voyage, and I says, bully for you, and—ay, ay, sir, coming!"

Mate Vilper had called and Soper hastened to obey, leaving the diver alone. The look that went after the sailor was not amiable, and Cooper was plainly upset. A third person would have said that the sailor had not made a miss when he sent his shot home to his late companion.

"Knows me, does he?" growled the diver. "Fine fellow to carry the secret of another man! He would sell his soul for a dollar, but he won't get that much from me. I hate to be cheated. He can't blackmail me. And yet—and yet——"

For a while Roger scowled at the inoffensive sea, but soon regained his outward serenity and talked agreeably with those who had anything to say to him. Until the brigantine fetched to the Starvation Reefs he would be the idlest man aboard.

It was this idleness that, an hour later, led him to discover another vessel far astern, so far, indeed, that he was not certain that it was more than an ordinary cloud speck on the horizon. Taking languid interest in solving the question, he made sure he had his sea-glass and started up the shrouds.

It was the first step in another series of strange events.

CHAPTER III.

ROGER gained the lookout, placed himself to his liking, and made ready for the look at the stranger. He had already discovered that the latter was not so far astern as he had supposed, but that the unknown craft was so low-lying that its position was deceptive when viewed from the deck.

That peculiar build immediately made his interest keener, and he trained his glass without delay.

He saw a hull that was painted gray, the most unobtrusive shade that can be laid upon a ship; and above it masts that were surprisingly slender. No wonder the stranger had seemed so far away previously, for the whole design was one calculated to let the goer of the deep slip along like a bit of cloud or drift of spray.

"Makes but little more than a dent in the atmosphere!" Roger muttered.

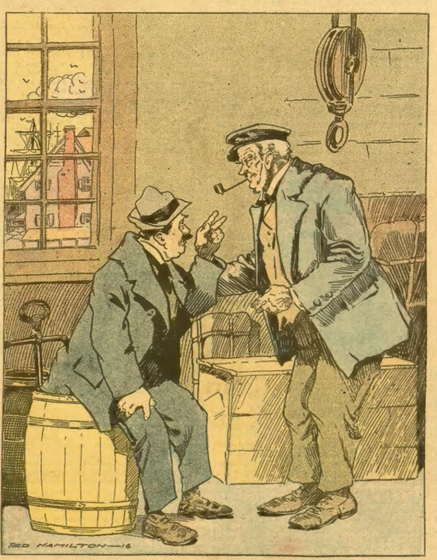
Men were visible on the stranger's deck, and something more soon took his attention. One of their number was, unless he erred greatly, dressed in a diver's suit.

"I wonder!" he added softly.

He did wonder, for, while divers were no curiosity to one who led that life himself, there were conditions about the voyage of the Shooting Light that took the commonplace out of the usual sea conditions. Here was this craft following where the brigantine led, and like that ship the follower carried a diver.

There was so little to be made out that Roger soon shifted his glass and studied the deck elsewhere. Another discovery came quickly.

"Ah-h! A big gun mounted in the bows! What's that for in this day when all men are at peace? Some cannon, that is! It would hurt the feelings of the Shooting Light to receive a ball from her muzzle in hull or rigging. Anyhow, why—and a big why, too—does she carry a mounted gun?"



"What," he asked, "was my last ship?"

It was impossible to get an answer, but the sea trailer lost no interest as the situation was studied.

"Lies low, and painted gray, as if to escape notice as far as possible. Man in diver's suit. Big gun! What's afoot?"

Ten minutes later the watcher descended to the deck.

"What do you make of her?" asked Mate Vilper, carelessly.

"A trim lump of a schooner. Her name is the Gray Ghost."

"How do you know that?"

"I don't know what they call her, but I've named her myself. The Gray Ghost, Mr. Mate."

"Gracious!"

The officer stared blankly, and Roger broke into a laugh. Vilper had about as much sense of humor and as much imagination as a belaying-pin, and the serious way he took this remark was comical. He had no real interest in the stranger, however, so the matter was dropped without further details.

Half an hour later the brigantine struck a new slant of wind, and her helm was shifted a few points to fill to the best advantage. It was a natural step, but, soon after, looking back, Roger saw that the Gray Ghost had made the same change, tho, being so far astern, she could not have caught the slant. His brow knitted thoughtfully.

"Bound to dog us, anyhow!" he muttered. "That begins to look interesting. What bug is chewing those stranger fellows?"

There was no answer that day, but the schooner held her course, standing after the leader quietly and unobtrusively. Making no confidants, Roger kept a lookout, until a thin fog, settling over the ocean, shut her from view to such an extent that he dropped her out of consideration. After all, what did it matter that another ship was afloat?

Night came finally, and the brigantine, under slightly reduced sail, poked her nose into the fog quietly, her deck lights all going, the one bright spot in the dull expanse. It was a peaceful time, for, tho the breeze was favorable, there was not enough weight in it to lift the sea, and there was little more than a cat-lapping along the hull.

Roger had no watch to stand, and at three bells he turned in, soon falling asleep with the commendable habit of his years. Some hours afterward he awakened, starting up with the impression that a collision had occurred.

He flung on his clothes hastily and hurried toward the deck, but before his head rose above the companion he smiled sheepishly, beset with the new impression that he had dreamed the alarm. A moment later he knew this to be true, for the whole place was quiet, and the brigantine was holding her way placidly. It would do no harm to have a look, however, and he did not stop.

Thick fog lay beyond the hull, the deck lights burned feebly, and at first he could see nobody but the man at the wheel, but the sails were bellying moderately and the course was without a flaw.

Walking slowly, after his first survey, he soon saw human figures, but, with nothing to do, he doubted that anybody was fully awake except Vilper and the helmsman.

The latter, he noticed, was Lem Soper, and this led him to direct his way elsewhere than toward the point where the binnacle light burned. For ten minutes he walked and idled by turns, and then decided to go below, mentally putting his impressions into words.

"Not even a sea-fowl to make a sensation."

It was almost at that instant that there was a soft little noise which reminded him of the "plump" of a falling football, so unobtrusive was its nature, and he turned to look where it sounded. A bank of fog, hugging the deck, obscured his vision, but the sound was briefly forgotten as his roving gaze took in something else.

A few fathoms away a dim shape was sliding quietly past the brigantine, and he knew it to be a vessel. More than that, it flashed upon him that the collision he had dreamed about was actually to occur, but further looking dispelled that fear.

The other craft was standing the same course as themselves, but going so much faster that she was a mere flitting spot in the darkness, no light showing, no sail slatting, no timber creaking audibly. She quickly faded into the gloom as she drew away, but left a decided belief in his mind.

"It was the Gray Ghost!"

He stared after her, and instinctively tried to analyze the case.

"Was it almost a collision? No, for she was under perfect control. Still, she came so near that it was a close call—but I'm not so sure of that. Can it be she wanted to look our deck over? Bosh! Might as well try to pick up a pin in this fog. Yet, it's a sure thing she ran close to us intentionally. Now, why—why?"

He swung about hastily.

"That soft little plump on the deck! I wonder——"

A few long steps took him to where he believed the sound had been, and, not seeing anybody, he began to search the surface of the deck He had the impression that something had been flung from the Gray Ghost to the brigantine, and wanted to know what it was. It was not customary for one vessel to shape her course so close to another that danger was thereby incurred, and then throw anything aboard, but if it had been done now he scented mischief in it. He wanted to find that something.

The search was difficult, for the lanterns did not carry light beyond the fog that hugged them immediately, and neither his eyes nor his exploring feet happened upon the object.

He finally paused, beaten, and mechanically looked at the man at the wheel. Soper was there, steering with excellent skill, but the binnacle light fell only on his breast, leaving his face in shadow. For a moment Roger thought of questioning him, but he wanted little to do with the fellow, and he kept away.

The whole matter had been uncanny. The schooner had passed perilously near, yet she had not been hailed or reported. As near as he could tell nobody but himself had seen or heard her, and nobody had heard the fall of the mysterious something cast to the brigantine's deck.

An impulse to secure a lantern and search openly was checked in a startling way. A wild shout rose from the fog hard by where he stood.

"Ship ahoy! Look out! Shift your helm or we shall run into her. Look out!"

Roger swung around. On the port bow lights blinked dully in the outlying gloom, and he saw a ship bearing down upon them, driving like a missile and, he knew, not to be avoided.

Other shouts rose, excited orders in two quarters, and then there was a shock and a splintering of wood as the two vessels came together violently.

CHAPTER IV.

THE brigantine reeled under the blow, and her starboard rail dipped low, but Roger experienced no acute worry. He had seen that the other vessel was of small size, and realized that the blow had been glancing. Unless the stranger had poked her nose into the hull of the Shooting Light below the water-line, Captain Hardy's craft would pull thru without serious loss. That was not so certain of the second party to the collision.

The shock had been followed by wild cries, and as the stranger slid slowly along the side of the brigantine, men were to be seen moving wildly on her deck. Then they came leaping to the larger ship, and all so plainly overwrought that it was no surprise when one of their number fell to dancing in terror.

Mate Vilper had been quick to shout orders, and he was proving that his usual outward lifelessness did not prevent his rising to energy when there was need. Roger nodded approvingly as he saw that the mate was capable of handling the situation well.

Captain Hardy appeared, half-dressed, cool and alert, analyzed Vilper, had a look at the strange craft and then turned to her men.

"Anybody hurt?" he asked sharply.

"We all alive," somebody replied feebly.

"Sure?"

"Yes, all here. One, two, four, all here."

"Your schooner is sinking."

"She not worth much. Let her go."

"Nothing you want to save?"

"Let all go. We here—and that is good."

"You ought to know best, but I always want my spare clothes in a wreck. You needn't be scared, for there are some minutes ahead of you yet."

"We dressed now, an we stay."

Some of the brigantine's hands grinned, for the situation impressed them as amusing. The newcomers were plainly Malays, and as plainly badly frightened, and this was so unsailorlike as to be comical in the estimation of some.

Roger suddenly held up a commanding hand.

"Listen!" he ordered. "Didn't I hear a call for help? Sounded to me like a woman's cry."

"Oh, yes," placidly added one of the Malays, "there are two women in the cabin."

"Why, you idiots!" cried Hardy. "You said everybody was here."

"That is right," returned the Malay. "Everybody is here. Nobody left behind but the women."

"All this time lost——"

Roger began in an angry voice, but as the smitten schooner lunged closer he made a sudden move and sprang to her deck.

"Bear a hand!" he added, looking back over his shoulder.

Vilper paused briefly, saw that the respective riggings were sufficiently entangled to hold the two vessels together, and then secured a lantern and followed, overtaking Roger as the latter wrestled with obstructing raffle near the companion.

"We've got to get below quickly!" Roger exclaimed. "She won't stand up much longer."

"Fifty to one the schooner is so crushed below that we shall take out only dying women," said the mate.

"Even at that, we'll give them a chance to die in peace, and decently. Here, have a pull at this litter—ah! we lift it!"

Spars and canvas had oddly combined to cover the companion—one of the singular chances of the sea—but they hauled it clear lustily.

"Now we'll get below——"

Roger stopped short. Heads immediately rose to view, and before them were two women, one of whom supported the other.

"Here, you, Larro, lower the boat!" came from the stronger of the two. "This ship is stove and we shall sink—bless me, it is not Larro!"

Night and the fog bothered the vision, but Roger was certain that the speaker was a Malay, and that the slighter figure she held was that of a white woman.

"Anybody else below?" he asked keenly.

"No. Maybe they have run like rats. This girl, she sick in her head and scared now very much. Do I see another ship? Will either of them keep afloat——"

"Here, give me the girl!" Roger broke in. "I'll pass her to safety. Sure nobody else below?"

"There was only us two and four men——"

"The men are safe. Now, then, to the deck of the brigantine."

The entangled rigging was still holding, but the vessels had some leeway, and they rolled back and forth troublesomely, yet it was little to the experienced sons of the sea. The women were soon passed to the Shooting Light, and then Roger made a trip below. He found the little den of a room that had been a sleeping place until it was crushed in, located a quantity of women's wear, gathered it up with his free hand, and hurried away. Water was up to his knees, and the lantern showed that it was coming in fast. The schooner was certainly not a place of safety.

By the time he gained the deck Captain Hardy was shouting loudly.

"You, Cooper," he called, "get lively! We've got to cast adrift or the brigantine will go down to—ah, that's it!"

Roger had flung his burden to the Shooting Light, and as he safely followed, the axes of the men sounded aloft as they hacked away at the entangled rigging. Presently the schooner fell away, and the larger craft, accommodatingly filling, the two drew apart. The lesser sea traveler was left wallowing and dipping to her fate.

Cooper looked about him appraisingly. All hands were gathered, but, seen in the lantern-light, the central figures were a slender girl who seemed to be in a partial swoon, and a sturdy Malay woman and Captain Hardy who supported her. The girl was the one refined feature of the scene.

"We are drawing away," said Hardy, cheerfully, "and the last plunge of the schooner will not do us harm. What's your report, Vilper?"

He had broken off short as the mate came to his side.

"I think our only damage is a bit of muss in the rigging, sir. Our outer hull is sound above the water-line, and Ben reports no water to be discovered below. We struck that other fellow in such a way that we didn't get stove, so we are as sound as a nut, I reckon."

"What was the other craft?"

"A very little schooner, sir," came the reply from one of the Malays. "She was the On-We-Go, Manila to San Francisco, with a cargo of indigo and hemp. I am Captain Mosco."

"Sorry we did your ship harm, captain."

"Oh!" said the Malay, showing his teeth in a satisfied smile, "she was insured. Pity the underwriters."

Roger had been looking at the half-conscious white girl, and now he first spoke to Hardy and then to the Malay woman, and, with her help, undertook to get the afflicted person below.

"Have no further worry," he said kindly. "You will be well cared for now. Your peril is over."

There was no reply, and he had no glance from her set eyes.

"Don't worry," he added, anxious to banish her fears.

"No use," said the Malay. "She, poor thing, not understand. We pick her up some days back, and her head it goes bad with her. You see what I mean? She so!"

Releasing one hand she tapped her forehead suggestively, and Roger feared that he did understand. They conducted their charge to a stateroom, and then, as it was clear that the woman was full of sympathy, he prepared to leave her to deal with the case. Her recent remark, however, was hovering in his mind.

"What do you mean by having lately picked her up?" he asked.

"From a drifting boat. We come upon her all alone in that little—oh! so little—boat, nothing with her but some extra clothes, loosely flung in, and just a bit of food so a mouth could eat. But she, poor thing, she lay unconscious, and when we nurse her back to some health, she—oh! so bad here!"

Again that suggestive tapping of the forehead.

"I see!" the diver murmured. "What's her name?"

"She says it is Hagar, but we think she doesn't remember. Her mind, that is so bad!"

Roger glanced at the sagging figure, and then at the sympathetic face of her caretaker and took a step away.

"My name is Porgera," added the Malay.

"All right, Porgera. Take good care of the girl, and we'll take good care of you."

"Oh! I take care of myself," was the confident but smiling reply.

The diver returned to the deck and found that order had nearly been restored there. The Shooting Light was injured only in the rigging, and but slightly there, and was again standing her course with a calm sailor at the wheel. It was to be supposed that the On-We-Go had sunk forever, but the fog had hold of the sea astern and left that to be guessed.

Captain Hardy was looking at the Malay seamen and pulling at his beard in a way that indicated a perturbed mind. Previously, the brigantine had held all the men that were needed, and he was plainly far from pleased to have these four sons of the Philippines thrust upon him.

Mosco was not of that mind outwardly, and he showed his teeth in the placid mood that had been his since he found he was not to sink into the sea.

"All good hands," he said, waving his arm at his mates. "We make sail with the best of them, splice ropes, clean decks, go aloft like birds, laugh at gales, make you feel plenty glad you have us here."

Hardy nodded in silence, and then, seeing Roger by his side, spoke so low that the Orientals could not hear.

"I'll transship the whole lot the first ship we sight."

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THE BORDER SPY

-:- Or, -:-

American or Mexican

By Augustin W. Breeden

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Begun in No. 35, Aug. 26. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

"THEY WILL SHOOT US BOTH."

JULIA ran to the stricken man the moment he fell, moved by a great pity that forgot youth, sex, everything but the need of him who had fallen. She lifted his head and held it in her lap. She called to him: "Mr. Brant—Billy Brant, can't you hear me?" Then she let his head fall back gently on the grass. He was dead.

"We've got to conceal his death." That was the first thing that Harry said, when those who had given chase to Juan began to return. "Keep those men back, Julia; we must conceal his death. Julia, as God lives, Juan is not to blame for this man's death. I don't believe he even knew that Mexican was hiding here, and he knocked the first pistol out of his hand; I saw him do that."

Hisuta had run out from the house and was shouting excitedly.

"Go and make him hush up," said Harry to Julia. "And make everybody about the house stay away from this spot. No one must know of this but us two. I will take the body and——"

Some of Harry's men were coming so near that he had to rush out to meet them and turn them back. Later he returned and tried to get a carrying hold on the dead man. He could never have believed that the man weighed so much. He had half lifted him up to drag him when some one touched him on the shoulder.

"Let him lie," said a voice. It was Doctor Meriton speaking. "Who killed him?"

"A Mexican spy."

"Your brother?"

"No, a Mexican spy whom I don't know. Only he was a large man with black beard, a dark man."

"And what was a Mexican spy doing here in my grounds? He was with your brother, now, wasn't he?"

"I don't think he was, but he may have been. My brother tried to keep him from killing this man."

"Naturally." Just then Julia returned. "Julia, who killed this man?" asked the father.

"A dark man, with beard—a Mexican, I think."

"What was he doing here?"

"I don't know."

"What was Juan Gonzaulus doing here?"

"He came to see me, and to learn if I had seen Harry."

"A miserable traitor! Julia, I am surprised that you let him come back here."

"I, too, wanted—wanted to ask about Harry."

"I shall go to Greenacres tonight and denounce him as a traitor and an accomplice in this murder," said the father, tensely.

The girl was on her knees before him.

"Please, please don't, Daddy!" she sobbed; and in that sob Harry Gonzaulus read his own doom.

"Listen, Doctor Meriton," said Harry huskily. "These things that have passed here tonight are more or less of a personal nature—they involve love, hate, family honor, other things quite as much as war. Let me repeat to you one thing on my honor as a gentleman, Juan Gonzaulus had nothing to do with the death of this man, and he came here on no spying mission. Your daughter will not tell you why he came; he came here tonight to propose marriage to her. Why the Mexican was with him I do not know. They say that a government often sends out one spy to spy upon another; that may have been his mission; or the Mexican government may furnish my fallen brother with a secret bodyguard. But however it is, we two, Julia and I, have a skeleton in the closet, and I see nothing to be gained by letting this man's death become known."

"His death ought to be blazoned to the ends of the country as the death of a hero and martyr," said the doctor. "I understand he came here to help you arrest your brother and put a stop to his spying."

"He did," replied Harry, looking down sadly at the face of the dead man. "But we were all too hasty. Your daughter could have stopped him more effectively than any of us; but we got too fast; we played our cards ahead of time, and none of us knew that scoundrel Mexican was lurking here."

"Perhaps you are right about concealing his death," said the doctor, musingly. "If the papers came out tomorrow evening with great scare heads—'Ranch Foreman Murdered by Mexican Spy'—they might precipitate a war. It will take only a straw now to break the camel's back."

"That's what I was thinking of," said Harry, "and of your daughter's good name. If the thing gets out, her connection with it is almost sure to be known. You see, all the men I brought here knew that Juan had come here to see her. But I mustn't keep them waiting any longer. Can't you help me carry the body somewhere?"

"Bring it into our little chemical-room," said the doctor, "and I myself will watch till morning."

The three took the dead man into the room designated.

"Julia, call old Jose," said the doctor, "I must send him to Greenacres tonight on other business not directly connected with this."

Julia went toward the back of the house, but presently returned, and with white lips announced that not a Mexican or Japanese servant was to be found about the place. This simple announcement of the sudden departure of all the servants without leave seemed somehow more significant than anything that had preceded it. It seemed to presage the coming of war and all the horrors of war, as the saying is that when a ship is doomed the rats leave it.

"I will go to Greenacres for you, Doctor Meriton," offered Harry.

"No, you could not tend to my business for me. I will wait and go myself tomorrow night. You had better get to Las Mesas now and see your men and quiet their suspicions, if they have any. Come back early in the morning."

"All right; I'll be back early."

And with that Harry Gonzaulus disappeared into the darkness—went out of Julia's life as suddenly as if he had been swallowed up by some fathomless crevasse. In the days that followed, while the poor girl fought out her battles alone, she was always haunted by a question that repeated itself over and over like the burden of a sad song. "Shall I ever behold either of them again?"

Meanwhile what had become of Harry Gonzaulus? As soon as Harry left Doctor Meriton with the dead man he hastened back over the trail to meet the men who had gone out with him. They were all neighbors of his, most of them old ranchmen who had known him from childhood. One man was his uncle, Uncle Johnny Gordon.

"I don't mind telling you men that there was a casualty over there at Willowcroft tonight," he said. "There were others there besides ourselves and the man we went after, and in the scrimmage somebody croaked. Now listen, men, there's nothing we can do about it, and I'm going to ask you all not to mention it to a soul, and not to ask me anything further about it. I've got a good deal of trouble on my hands now."

"That you have, Harry," said Uncle Johnny Gordon, speaking for the crowd, "and what's your business is your business, not ours. Is that right, men?"

"That's right."

"Then we'll call our little expedition tonight a failure, and I want to thank you all for standing by me and helping me as much as you did, and I'll bid you good night."

"Good night, Harry."

Having returned to Las Mesas ranch, Harry sat in his bedroom in the darkness trying to decide upon a course of action. He felt that he ought to denounce his brother to the United States authorities, just as he had threatened to do, but he believed that to do so would cause his brother to be shot as a spy; and he had told their dying mother that he would look after him. His life had come to be in an awful snarl, for there, again, was Julia, whom he loved—he never realized how much he did love her till now—and he knew that his brother also loved her, and believed that she returned that affection in some degree, at least.

It was long after midnight, and he was growing drowsy from the sheer repetition of his round of troubled thoughts, when he thought he heard a stealthy step on the front veranda. He sat perfectly still in the darkness and waited. There was a cautious knock on the front door. Harry's hand slid across the table where he sat and gripped the handle of his automatic. The knock was repeated several times.

Cautiously Harry got up and tiptoed to the door, intending to enter the hall and call and ask what was wanted at the door. He thought, after all, that it might be a messenger from Doctor Meriton. He held his pistol at the ready as he emerged into the hall. But the moment his head was thru the doorway he received a blind blow from behind that sent him flat on the floor, senseless. In the instant that that bludgeon collided with his skull he knew that his own Mexican servants had been tampered with; otherwise no one could have penetrated that far into his house without his knowledge.

When Harry came to himself it was broad daylight. His head was throbbing with pain, there was a continuous singing in his ears, and his neck and face were burning like fire. He found that he was lying in a bed of hot sand in the bottom of a dry arroyo. His hands were tied behind him, and his feet bound together with a rope. Sitting in the shade of a greasewood bush not far away he saw three men, presumably his captors. One was a Castilian Spaniard, judging by his beard and complexion. He was large, and looked as if he might be the same man who had murdered poor Brant. The other two were peons, low and squat and dark, degenerate types of a degenerated race.

"What the devil does all this mean?" asked Harry, angrily.

The bearded giant, whose back was turned, wheeled around and glared at him.

"We don't need any talk," he growled.

The other two seemed to be watching something across the desert. One of them had a pair of military field glasses. Neither made any move as Harry spoke.

"Well, if you're any soldier at all, you ought to treat me as a military prisoner, not as a criminal," snapped Harry. "I want my hands free and some water to bathe my head with, and I want some breakfast."

"You're not in a Gringo hotel now," growled the man. "Hush before I fill you full of lead like I did your foreman."

Harry knew that this monster would do exactly as he said They were alone in the desert, and in the Mexican desert there is no law, no decency, no justice—only the rule of the strongest or the quickest.

All day the four lay there in that dry arroyo and only at noon did one of the peons deign to give Harry a sip of water. Then at dark they started south, as Harry knew by the look of the starry heavens. They rode all night like mad, Harry with his feet strapped together under his horse's body, his hands tied behind him, and his horse led by two lead reins, one in the hand of each of the peons, while the giant Castilian rode behind and commanded the company. At daybreak they reached a little 'dobe house by a muddy water hole, kept by an old peon woman, and Harry was given his first opportunity to eat. He ate the filthty meal of enchiladas, tortillas, black coffee and cheese that was set out before him. He ate heavily, as he did not know when he would get another bite. Still he could not have been sure that the food was not poisoned, only for the fact that the others ate with him from the same supplies.

They rode all day long thru a region held apparently by bandits of the Villa sort, for Harry saw absolutely nothing all day long either of U. S. troops or of men with the Carranzista uniform. At nightfall they were well up toward the timber line of some unknown mountains, and often crossed plunging streams of ice-cold water. The country was positively beautiful. "Some part of the Sierra Madres, I guess," mused Harry. "If they take me into one of their mountain fastnesses I may never see the United States again."

They finally brought to at a great log house in the bottom of a steep mountain gulch and in the midst of a pine thicket, with an icy stream racing in front of the door.

"Halt!" shouted the Spaniard to his two aides.

Another bearded giant, but with flaming red beard instead of black, came out to them. His face and hands were black as if he had just suddenly come up from the sooty region down below, and Harry was quick to look for the cause. There were two charcoal pits near the house, where no doubt a part process in the making of primitive old-fashioned powder was carried on.

"We've roped you another maverick," roared "Blackbeard" in perfectly good cowboy American.

"Redbeard" laughed uproariously. "Well, turn 'im in the corral!" he shouted.

They ushered Harry into the great log house. It was dark within, and hot and oppressive from lack of ventilation. At first he could distinguish nothing in the dim light of the place, following upon the brilliant light that his eyes had suffered all day. "Redbeard" gave him a sudden push into the room, and closed a great spiked oaken door behind him.

Harry at first thought he was entirely alone, but presently a voice spoke to him in Spanish, a voice that had the soft, cultivated accent of an educated person of old Spain.

"So you are their prisoner, too, senor?" said the voice from the gloom. "It is very unfortunate, because they will probably shoot us both in a day or two."

CHAPTER V.

A GREEN VEIL.

JUST a little after daybreak, when Julia came to announce to her father, watching by the corpse of Brant, that his breakfast was ready for him—poor girl, she was not used to cooking and had made a bad enough affair of it!—old Aunt Mandy came waddling up the walk, her face ashen with fright. Mandy was one of the few negroes in all that belt of country, and she lived more or less yearly in the fear of so many "furriners."

"Land sakes, little missy," she panted now. "Dey's done kilt pore Marse Harry, I reckon, and dey's sich carryin's on over at the ranch dis mawnin' ez I never heered tell of befo'. Dem black furriners done tole me dey's gwine tar and feather me an' bu'n me alive effen I didn't git away fum dar; an' dey was fixin' to set fire to de whole place when I lef'." The "furriners" she had reference to were Harry's Mexican help. "Dey's cut de wires to Greenacres, an' lef' us high an' dry."

Doctor Meriton, came out of the little chemical-room and closed the door quickly behind him, that Mandy might not see what the room contained. He looked toward Las Mesas rancho, the home of his respected friend, Harry Gonzaulus. Now, there is not much about a 'dobe and stucco house that will burn, but smoke was pouring from every window. Those Mexican fiends were making every effort to burn at least the furniture and interior woodwork, evidently. And presently a black column of smoke and then a fierce red tongue of flame shot up where the big modern wooden barn had stood.

Doctor Meriton said a low word under his breath. "It will be our turn next, I guess," he said aloud.

"Oh, Daddy, what will we do?" There was real terror in Julia's face.

The father stroked her golden hair sadly. "I'll try to get you into Greenacres," he said. "That's our only chance now. Either that, or try to get a detachment of U. S. troops to help protect us."

Never were two women in greater trouble and terror than Julia and Aunt Mandy that June morning. They heard from afar the shouts that meant the uprising of former faithful Mexicans; they watched from afar the utter and wanton destruction of the Las Mesas ranch. Finally they and the doctor locked themselves in and prepared to defend Willowcroft against invasion.

"I don't believe they will attack Willowcroft," said the doctor. "I have done them too many kindnesses. I have practiced amongst them free of cost, and have furnished them medicine or the money to buy it with more than once. Still, if they approach too near now, I'll have to dose them with lead pills."

In the preparation for defense old Mandy discovered the presence of death in the house. Her face went ashen, far more ashen than it had been when she first came.

"Who dat in de medicine-room?" she asked, hoarse with terror.

"Hush, Aunt Mandy, the dead can't harm any one." This from Julia.

"Who it is?" persisted the old negress. "Is dat Marse Harry? Oh! Is dat mah little marster?"

"No," replied the girl, beginning to weep. "No, it is not Harry, Aunt Mandy. Oh, I wonder where poor Harry is and what has become of him! Aunt Mandy, tell me what happened to Harry."

"Ah doan't know, little missy," said the old negress, shaking her gray head. "When I woke up this mawnin' and started to git brakfus de house was empty an' he was gone. Dey'd been foul play, too. Dey was a big club in de hall wi' blood on it."

Julia sank down upon a couch and began to sob quietly.

"Who dat in de medicine room?" asked the old negress hoarsely, again, her great eyes rolling in terror. "It ain't Marse Juan, is it?"

"No, he's gone."

"Who it is, den?" She seemed suddenly to get light. "Say, little missy, whar Misteh Brant, whar he is, I axe you? Is dat Misteh Brant a-lying all cole an' white in de medicine-room?"

"Yes, Mandy, but listen, you mustn't make a howling about it. You must control yourself and be quiet, as Daddy and I are doing."

But there was no use to warn. Mandy began at once to wail for the dead. One would have thought the dead man was the child of her bosom to have heard her carryings on. What there is in the African negro character that makes them want to wail over the dead as a dog does, let them say who know; I do not know. But Mandy's wailing soon so got upon poor Julia's nerves that she was thrown into hysterics, and only the doctor's stern command for both of them to desist ever put a stop to it.

The three sat till noon, the girl huddled close to the old negro mammy for protection, or human companionship, the father with a Winchester across his lap and his eyes on the alert for belligerent Mexicans. But none came and after dinner the doctor knocked a rude pine coffin together, and he and Aunt Mandy went out into the shrubbery in the edge of the irrigated field, and scooped out a shallow grave. And to this they gently carried the poor fellow who had given his life as a martyr for patriotism, doing his duty bravely as he saw it. Julia laid a large bouquet of pink gladioluses in his hands, and they laid upon his coffin a little American flag that he had spoken about with admiration and spirit just a day or two before.

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and the God of our nation's heroes accept his soul!" the doctor intoned devoutly, and he sprinkled the first few clods of soil and caliche upon his coffin. Then quickly he and old Aunt Mandy refilled the grave, took the excess of dirt in baskets and dumped it into the lake, and carefully replaced the bermuda sod above the spot to conceal it from curious eyes.

Those at the lonely ranch-house of Willowcroft had hardly finished with these sad rites when real danger began for them. Julia was first to discover a little band of dark men on foot, lurking in the mesquite and greasewood not far north of the frijole field. She touched her father on the arm and called his attention to it. The three retreated into the house and barricaded the doors with all the furniture they had.

The father sat by a loophole under the eaves, with a loaded Winchester on either side of him and a great Colt automatic in his hand. He had posted Aunt Mandy to load for him. The old negress had lived with the Gonzauluses or Gordons in the Southwest ever since the days of the last Comanche raids, so this scene was not entirely novel to her, as it was to Doctor Meriton and poor Julia.

Julia had to guard one wing of the house. She had a beautiful thirty-thirty, and had trained herself to shoot it, so that she had once killed an antelope standing end-to at nearly five hundred yards, and her father felt that she might at a pinch account for one or two Mexican murderers. The girl had ceased from trembling now, and her hysteria was all gone. She thought of the probable fate of Harry Gonzaulus, and it nerved her to kill if necessary, in defense of her own life and honor.

The dark figures skirted the bean field and gained a position on the other side of the willow-flanked lake, a position from which they could approach the house under cover of the willows. Only momentarily did the doctor catch a view of them. They were crawling on hands and knees. They evidently thought they were taking the place by surprise.

"Come to this side, daughter," said the father in a tense tone. "They're all going to attack from this side. Shoot at the foremost one when they make their dash; I'll take the second one all the time. If two are running abreast, take the left one to you all the time. Keep your nerve now, daughter, keep your nerve, and remember Columbus!"

As he spoke the last word a dozen Mexicans dashed from among the willows and cannas and branching asparagus near the end of the lake, and ran straight for the front portals of the bungalow, carrying their Winchesters and pump guns at the ready, but making almost no noise.

Two sharp reports rang out almost simultaneously, and the two foremost Mexicans plunged forward on their faces. The others halted in confusion for a second. Two more reports spoke out and two more crinkled down upon the grass. Then a sharp command in Mexican rang out and the remainder of the party leaped toward the door, and under the portals where they could not be fired upon from above.

Julia was as white-faced as she would be in death; the doctor, too, was white-faced, but the hands of both were still steady. Aunt Mandy was dancing about the room screaming at the top of her voice, and the doctor had to threaten her with all sorts of dire punishment if she didn't keep still. When she grew quiet they could hear below the steady beating of Winchester butts against the great oaken doorway. The Mexicans were trying to beat it in. But the doctor had pushed a grand piano against it and spiked the feet of the piano to the polished floor; besides, the door itself was double-barred.

"They'll tackle the windows next," said Doctor Meriton. "You watch that side of the portal, Julia, and I'll watch this. Be sure to get the first one that ventures from the portal of the doorway."

"I'm watching."

They both waited for two tense minutes. The pounding had fallen off somewhat. They could hear a continuous stream of Mexican jabbering The doctor was rather surprised that they had not yet tried the windows.

Then suddenly he knew the cause. A half-dozen of the besiegers suddenly showed themselves in front of the portal, not at the sides as he had expected, and at the same instant, while both the doctor and Julia were trying to bring their guns to bear on this new position, there was a deafening roar. The exposed men disappeared under the portal instantly, as if sucked in by the concussion.

"Dynamite!" spoke the doctor. "They're on us. Watch the head of the stairs and take the first one always. Save—save one last cartridge in your automatic for yourself, and be sure to use it before any one is in arm's reach of you, unless I'm still living and standing by you. Don't—don't fall into their hands!"

But the Mexicans seemed in no haste to rush that stairway.

The doctor crept across the floor and peered down. He tiptoed back.

"More dynamite!" he whispered. "They're taking no more chances, the dirty murderers! God! but I wish I could get a shot!"

"Can't we jump out here, and run for it, Daddy?" asked the girl.

"No! Look out! Stand on tiptoe! On tiptoe, auntie!"

A second detonation struck like a clap of thunder. The air about them was filled with dust and flying debris.

Then as the last echo from the explosion came from the wall of willows, a bugle call sounding double-quick was heard sweet and cheering, only a little way to the north toward Greenacres. A moment later all was confusion below stairs; the besieging Mexicans were flying for their lives.

"Get to a loophole and pot as many of them as you can," cried the father.

"Oh, Daddy, I can't!" answered the

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girl. "I've just been watching one of those out in front die. It's too horrible! I can't fire another shot."

"D—n them!" muttered the father. "To give you such an experience! But you mustn't think of it, daughter—you mustn't think of it."

But the father found that he also was unable to bring himself to shoot at the back of the fleeing Mexicans. He saw them gain the mesquite and mount their horses and ride away in a cloud of dust; and he hurried to the roof to direct the cavalry which way to go to overtake them quickest.

A cloud of dust sprang up on the still afternoon air north of the bean field, and presently a troop of galloping horsemen hove into view. A guidon was streaming from the point of the second horseman's spear, and the whole cavalcade presented a fine, gallant appearance. Doctor Meriton fired off his automatic to attract their attention, and motioned for them to ride west past the house toward the railroad junction; and without slacking their speed a jot, and with only a casual glance at the four dead Mexicans, they galloped madly past the house.

Julia, stationed with old Mandy at a west dormer window, watched them disappear into a cloud of dust. There were faint shots, and she fairly prayed that none of those gallant Americans was being potted. But presently there was another bugle call toward the north, and another cloud of dust developed on the northern horizon, and from it emerged a second troop of horse, with streaming guidon and flashing equipment. The captain drew rein, and Doctor Meriton hurried down to talk with him.

"Yes," said the captain, "We've suspected since yesterday evening that all was not well down this way. You see one of our officers tried to call up Las Mesas ranch and the wire was dead. Also, the power people reported no load on their wires for down this way. Then, about one this afternoon, we got a radiograph: 'Mexican attack on Wirley.' So there's where we're started. Anybody hurt here? No? That's good. Well, the infantry will leave you a corporal's guard. We are moving quite a number of troops down this way. We were just ready to move from Greenacres, anyway. You'll see plenty of good old U. S. boys before night. Good by!"

"Good by, and God bless you!"

Within an hour the road began to be full of marching troops. They came forward four abreast, carrying short Springfield rifles—very efficient-looking, and singing a song something like this:

"It's a long way to Tucumcari,
It's a long way to go,
It's a long way to Tucumcari,
And the longest drinks we know!
(The strongest drinks!)
Good-by to Tom and Jerry!
Farewell, rock and rye!
It's a long, long way to Tucumcari,
Since Greentown went dry!

It's a long way to Tucumcari
And close to El Paso,
It's a long way back to little Mary—
Not far to Mexico.
(We'll catch a Mex!)
Good-by to mediation,
Farewell to hot air,
It's a long, long way to old Chihuahua,
But we'll soon be there!"

There was a gay, martial air about these spirited fellows, and into the bargain they looked very efficient and businesslike, and likewise very young and winning and lovable. Their enthusiasm was contagious; and in a moment Julia had forgotten temporarily about the lost Harry, the dead Brant, the treacherous Juan, the terrors of the day, and the dead Mexicans in the front yard, and found herself running madly along inside a low boxwood hedge, frantically waving a green auto veil and shouting at the top of her voice:

"Whip 'em! Whip 'em! Whip 'em! Whip 'em!"

"Of course we'll whip 'em!" shouted a grinning fellow with a big red cock's feather stuck jauntily into his Army hat. "That's what we're here for!"

Another shouted, evidently one who had read of the knights of old and the warriors bold: "Say, miss, give us your veil to wear for a favor!"

Julia wadded the veil into a ball and threw it over the hedge with all her might, and the fellow with the cock's-feather caught it skillfully on the muzzle of his Springfield. In a moment half the company were scrapping for a bit of it; and the last Julia saw of that company, every second man in it was wearing or carrying proudly a tiny bit of that auto veil.

A few moments later a third company came into view, singing proudly as they marched, to the tune of "Baby Mine:"

"We've a duty to perform,
Arizona, Arizona!
And the thing is getting warm,
Arizona, Arizona!
We are marching toward the line,
And the prospects they are fine,
For a very lively time,
Arizona, Arizona!
For a veree lively time,
Arizona!"

Julia was now frantically waving a little white handkerchief. She had reflected that "Whip 'em! Whip 'em!" sounded a little unladylike; but she was giving her girlish trill, a trill that Juan of blighted memory had said would rouse him out of his grave sooner than Gabriel's trump, should she ever sound it near his burying-place—a trill that had all the sweetness and a great deal of the carrying power of a silver bugle.

Four companies in all passed the house, and a corporal's squad from the provost guard had already turned out and were seeing what could be done to bury the dead Mexicans and guard the place against further molestation. Night was coming down, and a strange, chill terror was creeping into Julia's veins.

Then a footsore soldier boy came limping by, away behind his company, and ready to drop from fatigue and the terrible heat of the desert.

"Wait!" Julia called to him. "I have something I want to give you!"

"No, I can't wait, miss," replied the lad, doggedly. "I'll get behind my company."

"But you must wait for this, it is something for your whole company—for tired and sick boys such as you."

And as the boy halted Julia turned and ran up toward the house and barn for the gift she was going to make for the sake of the country she loved.

CHAPTER VI.

A SPANISH CLEOPATRA.

AT THE same hour that Julia was cheering the brave U. S. troops that marched past Willowcroft, a certain Mexican damsel of almost pure Castilian blood, Ysabel de Sao Paulo, was pitifully following a camp of "irregulars" thru the broken country of western Chihuahua. Her father, Manuel de Sao Paulo, a patriot above petty factions or vaulting ambitions, had been captured and imprisoned and possibly shot because of this very patriotism. But Ysabel, in the hope he was yet alive, was doing all in her power to get into touch with him.

Ysabel knew one man with some band of these "irregulars" whom she could depend upon to be big-hearted enough to do something for her in her efforts at her father's release. That man was Juan Gonzaulus. She had met him in Paris in the first terrible days after the great European War broke out, and as she had known him before when he was campaigning around Guaymas and Hermosilla, they had become in Paris the fastest of fast friends. It was she, it will be remembered, whom Juan mentioned to his brother as his excuse for loving the Mexican cause.

But Senorita Ysabel had a double reason in seeking an interview with Juan Gonzaulus. She knew Juan perhaps better than any other native Mexican alive, not because she had known him longer, but because she had studied him more closely, during a few of the great dramatic moments of his life, when his soul had suddenly stood out where it could be seen; and she did not believe for a moment that he was loyal to the Mexican cause. She had heard something of his reputation as a master spy in Europe, and she suspected that he was playing the same game here in north Mexico. She happened to know how strong was his love for the American flag, and how disgusted he had become at the turn of things in Mexico, just as her own patriotic father had been disgusted at the gradual ascendency of Pancho Villa to power and the utter failure of Carranza to make himself master. She aimed to get Juan Gonzaulus to help her find her father, and then she aimed to try to use her power, her woman's power, to turn him back from spying upon her people.

It was two nights after the fight at Willowcroft and the descent of U. S. troopers upon the scene, that Ysabel finally reached the little command that Juan had again joined and become leader of, and secured an interview with him. Juan felt from the first that there was little use to lie to this wonderful woman. Without loving her, he admired her more than any woman alive, for her courage, her patriotism, and her almost uncanny resourcefulness and cleverness in gaining her ends.

It was ten o'clock at night when she was admitted to Colonel Gonzaulus's little tent. From her scant wardrobe, carried about in a suitcase, she had dressed herself as fetchingly as possible. From the Italian Cuchetta she had secured information as to Juan's love for "Senorita" Julia Meriton, whom his brother also was suspected of loving. Thus armed within and without, she made forward to the attack. Her eyes were bright and limpid, like deep-welling springs, her cheeks made one think of great red roses. She was, on the whole, a magnificent creature, instinct with overflowing life, palpitant with the finest emotions, capable of working herself into any emotion to suit her purpose. When such a wonderful woman deliberately chooses to flirt, there are some chances of a broken heart.

"Is there no one within earshot, El Colonel?" was her first question, as she graciously gave Juan her dainty hand.

"Write what you have to say," replied Juan. "Imagine we are both deaf mutes."

The two sat at a little table side by side. The table was lighted by two candles thrust into the sockets of bayonets stuck up by their points in the soft pine table.

The girl took a pencil and wrote in Spanish:

"Those who love you are protecting you in your secrets."

"Let us be thankful for love," wrote Juan in reply.

"No one can know you and not feel a deep interest in you."

"So I have been told." The flirt was not making anything off of Juan.

"Revenge is oil and wine to the wounded heart," wrote Ysabel, "Why not turn away from her who drove you to desperation and love another?"

"Why write in riddles? Be plain."

"A girl dares not—not with a man."

"Be as plain as possible, I am no cad," wrote Juan.

"I have an undying interest in you; the secret of why I have I cannot divulge."

"Why? Because a girl dare not be plain."

"Yes, and for another reason."

They had covered the leaf they were scribbling on. The girl picked it up and held it to a candle flame. It flamed up and crinkled down to a black carbon, which she ground to pieces between her palms.

"I cannot understand your interest in me," he wrote at the top of a clean page.

"Must I tell you? And yet I dare not tell you all."

"Tell me."

"Manuel de Sao Paulo loves you like a son," wrote the girl.

"Well?" wrote Juan.

"I am De Sao Paulo's daughter. I would not willfully sacrifice one whom he loves. Also—I love you."

"You are a flirt, I can't believ what you say." Juan was so agitated that he skipped a letter in the word "believe."

"It is true," murmured the girl aloud, "true as truth." She trained those soulful Southern eyes on Juan, and gave him a winsome, ravishing look, then suddenly hid her face as if in an excess of modesty.

Juan put out his hand and covered hers. He felt the charm of this girl, her magnetism, and now he felt a sudden very, very strong friendship for her—his loyalty to Julia Meriton forbade him to call it by a stronger name.

"I believe you have an interest in me," he wrote. "What is your wish? Why have you come to me?"

"To beg you to fly while there is yet time."

"You write in riddles. Why should I fly? The enemy is far away."

"A brave man might fly if those who loved him were begging him to live for them."

Juan suddenly looked up and caught the melting look from the depth of those Spanish eyes. He wrote two words:

"Oh, Cleopatra!"

For answer the girl did not trust the wiles of the written word. She moved her hand ever so slightly so that it again touched him. Once more she looked into his eyes, but this time with an inscrutable look that would have put a wiser man than himself guessing.

"Oh, Cleopatra," he finished out the line, "I think you are trying to flirt with me. Know this then—Colonel Gonzaulus, like a good soldier of fortune, flirts only with death."

"Death is a cruel mistress!" wrote the girl.

This time it was Juan who burned the sheet by the candle flame.

"Death will be a kind mistress to me. I shall woo her till I win," he wrote at the top of a new sheet.

Ysabel wrote: "Her embrace is cold, and her kiss is bitter. My embrace is warm, and——"

Juan pushed her hand away and wrote:

"We are killing time. Come to the point. What is your proposition?"

"I come to bring you life in more ways than one——"

The girl suddenly dropped the pencil and got to her feet, and with the finest of acting brought the tears to her eyes as she stretched out her arms toward Juan.

"Oh, Juan, Juan!" she sobbed aloud. "Please remember that we have been friends so long, and under what circumstances you have stood by me as a friend. Do you wonder that I so frankly confess my—but there I dare not speak! The foolish conventions of the world forbid it."

"Cut out the dramatics!" snapped Juan. "If you have any message to deliver, deliver it at once."

The girl took the pencil and wrote: "There are those who will denounce you as a spy within twenty-four hours."

Juan never showed the slightest degree of excitement. He wrote:

"Do you mean my brother Harry?"

"No," wrote the girl, "I mean Victoriano Trabajar, the man who spied on you on your last trip into the States, and who killed Bill Brant."

Juan was far from feeling indifference at this reply. The woman's knowledge of events was positively uncanny. Could she be speaking the truth? he wondered. Was all his planning to go for naught, and was he to face a firing squad so soon? He wrote with a steady pencil:

"I will prove Victoriano Trabajar a liar."

"He heard what you said to Julia Meriton," wrote Ysabel at a mere venture.

The daring Ysabel did not know that he had said anything the least bit damaging to Julia Meriton, but she had to take a chance.

He wrote calmly: "Love-making is no crime."

She wrote: "Trabajar is terribly against you, and he has turned my father against you. I will stand by you, but I can do little."

He wrote: "While love and beauty stand by me I am safe."

A towering admiration for this young dare-devil was growing up in Ysabel's mind. She found herself wondering how Julia Meriton or any other sane girl could resist the love of such a man as this—a man who literally flirted with death and joked about it; above all, a man who could resist the wiles of such as she! The picture of herself, her father, and this daring, intrepid, masterful young man, going thru the world together took possession of her mind. After all, she mused, what was war and all its fortunes compared with love? Why had she been denied the power to love as other girls loved—to worship. It was her lot to be loved always, but never to love in return. Now she felt the scales turning when it would do her no good. She believed it was this man's loyalty to Julia Meriton that made him impervious to her charms. She decided to play Julia as her last card, tho it hurt her pride deeply to have it to do.

She wrote: "Colonel Gonzaulus, I came here to tell you a certain thing, and only my own selfishness and pride have kept me from telling you. Julia Meriton sends you this word." She leaned over and whispered the rest in Juan's ear: "I am yours, heart and soul."

Juan, heretofore all cool, now leaped to his feet in excitement.

"Honest truth, woman!" he cried. "Are you telling me the truth? Don't torment me with false hopes. Is this thing true?"

"As true as truth," she said.

"But she sends me no written word?" Juan's voice was vibrant with excitement.

"She sends you no direct word; she is too proud for that," replied the girl. It was her plan to get this young man, for whom, as she said, she cared too much to want to see him face a firing squad, back into the United States, and then denounce him to the Mexican leaders while he was safe out of their power. The black-bearded Trabajar, prowling about the grounds of Willowcroft looking for some evidence of Juan's treachery to Mexico, had found a bit of paper with English words on it, perfectly meaningless to him, but suspicious for that very reason; and this paper Ysabel had wheedled out of his hands by means of her woman's charms.

She now laid it on the little pine table. Juan saw Julia's fine, delicate handwriting, and for a moment everything swam before his eyes. Did she then love him, after all? He read the message:

"Oh, thou young man, the air of heaven is soft, and warm, and pleasant, but the grave is cold! Be governed! Quit the Tartar host and come——"

The lines indeed had little enough meaning for Ysabel, but to Juan they seemed to be full of a personal message. He and she had been reading "Sohrab and Rustum" together just before he left for the Mexican border, and had been discussing these very lines, and saying how foolish it was for Sohrab to refuse his father's offer of life. Handwriting is the most individual thing in the world, and has the power often to bring up a vision of the writer before the eyes of the reader, so now Juan seemed to see sweet Julia Meriton before him.

"I will give up my work and go to her," he said slowly, "tho I am a coward and a criminal to give up my work for—for the glorious Mexican republic."

"One good turn deserves another," said the girl, quickly putting her hand upon his arm. "If you know where my father is, won't you please send me to him, and also help me to save his life if it is threatened?"

"Gladly."

An orderly, a black little peon, stepped to the door of the tent and saluted. "A letter for Senor El Colonel," he said, handing Juan a thin missive. The latter excused himself and stepped back a little to read the note. It read:

"Watch Ysabel de Sao Paulo. She is plotting with old Trabajar to trap you.
G. C."

"G. C." were the initials of Giovanni Cuchetta, Juan's fellow U. S. spy. He could see it all now. Trabajar was, of course, not trusted by Julia with any missive. She had probably simply copied these words from "Sohrab and Rustum" and tossed them aside as waste paper, and the suspicious Mexican had seized upon them as something very significant and showed them to Ysabel; and she, wily creature that she was, had seen a way to make use of them. Well, he would play shrewdness against shrewdness with this creature. He stepped to the candle and burned up the paper and envelope, then crunched the charred carbon between his hands.

"What was it?" asked Ysabel, nonchalantly enough.

"Oh, just a military matter," answered Juan, with equal nonchalance. "So you want to go to your father? Well, I will give you a passport that will take you there. It will be my last act in Mexico, for I am going to quit this glorious game tonight. I am going back to the United States and settle down to a peaceful married existence." Juan suddenly put a great deal of emotion in his voice. "Ysabel, I hope I have not said anything tonight to hurt your feelings or cause you to think less of me. I have known you and liked you for a long time. I have always regarded you as a good friend—a good pal."

He shook hands with the girl warmly. Then he sat down and wrote:

"Piney Gorge, head left fork, Mormon Creek, red-bearded charcoal burner named Tom Swedler."

"These are your directions where to go, Ysabel," he said. "You'd better memorize it thoroly and then burn it up or tear it into fine bits. Now I will write you a passport." This read:

"To any Officer or Private of Carabeo's Irregulars: The bearer of this note is Senorita Paulo, Ysabel, features oval, regular, dark skin. Please pass as rapidly thru your territory as knowledge (of conditions) enables. Trial orders temporarily suspended (for her.) Yours,

"J. GONZAULUS,

"Lieutenant Colonel Irregulars, Grand Army, Re. Mex."

The four words, "dark," "skin," "temporarily" and "suspended' were underscored, but none of the others. Ysabel noticed this at the time and wanted to ask about it, but she thought she knew why "temporarily suspended" was underscored. And she was intent on making one more last play to discover if Juan really intended to go back to Julia Meriton and to the United States, and also to discover once for all if he were a spy.

"Listen," she said, as he handed her the passport. "I love these north Mexican rebels no better than you do. I am of the De Sao Paulo blood, and my father is now a prisoner in their hands. If you will give me your address in the States I will send you secret information constantly, which you can furnish to your Government."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"I mean, Juan, darling, that I love you so I would die for you if necessary. I know your secret, and yet I love you and will do your every bidding. And besides, I hate the peon cutthroats and all who rally to their cause!" She made a move toward Juan, but he waved her away.

"Give me back that passport!" he thundered. "I will have no traitors to Mexico passing thru my lines."

The girl was defeated. She had played her every card and had learned nothing. She had not even got to the point of asking for her father's life. She begged Juan with real tears in her eyes not to make her give up the passport, and also to save her father from death and help her to secure his release.

Juan relented with a show of reluctance.

"I'll let you keep the passport, and I'll give orders for your father's life to be spared for a time, at least," he said.

He took another piece of paper and wrote:

"Capt. Thomas Swedler: Do not execute Senor De Sao Paulo until further orders. J. GONZAULUS,

"Lieutenant Colonel Irregulars."

"Is that satisfactory?" he asked the girl.

"I guess I will have to be satisfied with it," she replied. She was beginning to fear this terrible American, who could be so mysterious and so stern.

With Juan's passport tucked snugly into her bosom, Ysabel rode out of the slumbering camp at midnight and took a dim trail west in the general direction of Mormon Creek and the Sierra Madres. At sunrise she rode over a low, sandy ridge, and came upon a camp of irregulars at an old irrigated farm known as the Nixthimal ranch. She rode up to a black peon sentry who challenged her. She confidently handed him her passport. He grinned, and she thought she had seen that grinning face before.

He lazily picked up his Krag-Jorgensen and grunted to her to follow him. She rode slowly after him to a low 'dobe house, several rooms in length but only one in depth. Here he bade her dismount and enter. She was presented to a dark little man called Major Triesta. The little Major was a mild-looking man with a thin waxed mustache. He looked like a henpecked dandy, if such a combination is possible.

Major Triesta read the passport with a smile that did not comport with his name. Then he drew out a code book and studied it and the passport point by point, and smiled some more.

Presently he looked up and said: "You are under arrest as a spy, senorita."

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* * *

Ma's Chance.

"Pa, why does the rooster crow?"

"I don't know, my boy."

"I'll tell you," said ma. "It's the nature of the male. He can't sleep, and he won't let anybody else sleep."

Ma'm'selle Felice

Or, A Studio Mystery

By Helen E. Haskell

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Begun in No. 34, Aug. 19. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

LYDIA.

IT WAS with a feeling of mingled nervousness and distaste that Kirk Ballinger pushed the electric button in the door jamb of the old-fashioned Twelfth street house which sheltered Lydia Armstrong.

Kirk had known Larry Horner's sister for a number of years, but their acquaintance had been of a casual sort, and since her marriage, eighteen months before, he had seen less than ever of her. From Larry he understood that Lydia had become active in the suffrage movement, and he had received one or two circulars recently, announcing talks to be given by her at Mothers' Meetings.

He recalled having smiled as he had dropped them into his waste basket, for Lydia was what he called a gentlemanly female, and the picture of her addressing a gathering of mothers on the rearing of their children was amusing.

It had always been a marvel to Kirk that men like Clarke Lindsey, and later, Douglas Armstrong, should have been attracted by Lydia. Possibly they had found in her very severity——

At this point in his reflections the door opened, and Lydia Armstrong herself stood facing him, her tall, black-robed figure outlined sharply against the background of light that streamed from the drawing-rooms at the left of the hall.

"Good evening, Mr.——" she began, then paused for a perceptible moment to peer near-sightedly at the man on her threshold. Recognizing him, she stepped back. "Mr. Ballinger, isn't it? Come in."

She held out her hand, her manner as unconcerned as if the jangling of her doorbell at eleven o'clock at night were a usual occurrence. Kirk stepped into the hall, closing the door behind him.

"Douglas is in Washington——" began Lydia.

"I came to see you—on an errand for Larry."

Kirk laid his gloves and hat on a chair, then followed Lydia into the drawing-room, and, as she seated herself, stood looking down at her.

Altho she was wearing a long black satin evening gown with a square low neck finished with Irish lace, it seemed to him that she looked as prim and as tailor-made as ever.

"Sit down, Mr. Ballinger," she said, and motioned to the chair opposite.

Kirk sank into it, sitting stiffly erect, his eyes on Lydia's broad, small-featured face. The composure of her expression had always been dismaying to Kirk. To-night, when his thoughts were in chaos, it appalled him.

For a moment he gazed at her, tongue-tied. Her blue eyes, flattened and magnified by her thick-lensed glasses, gave him no encouragement to tell his story. She simply sat waiting, and if she wondered what had brought him to her at such an unreasonable hour, she did not betray it by the lift of an eyebrow. Even her hair, parted and brushed back from her temples, had a calm, unruffled look, that in Kirk's agitated state of mind was disconcerting.

"You will pardon me for ringing your bell at this late hour, Mrs. Armstrong," he floundered.

Lydia smiled. "My maids go to roost with the chickens," she reassured him. Then, with her hands loosely clasped in her lap, she waited for him to go on.

With an effort Kirk plunged into the midst of things. "Larry is in trouble."

"Speeding?" asked Lydia. "Tell me about it." She smiled whimsically and leaned back in her chair.

"A little worse than that this time," said Kirk. He wondered how she would take the news he had to tell. He could not picture her otherwise than calm, apparently unfeeling.

"Somebody attacked Clarke Lindsey in his studio this evening. It is on that account that Larry is in trouble."

"Larry has been promising himself a quarrel with Clarke for a long time, Mr. Ballinger. The boy is too intense and hot-headed."

Lydia paused, opened and closed a book that lay beneath her hand, then looked up at Kirk. "Well, what am I expected to do?"

"Nothing, at present. Larry simply wanted me to break the news so you wouldn't have to see it first in the papers. He has been arrested."

"And Clarke?" she asked composedly.

Kirk Ballinger cleared his throat.

"There was no row between Clarke and Larry."

"But you said that Larry had been arrested."

"Merely as a witness. Somebody else attacked Clarke—stabbed him."

"Somebody stabbed Clarke Lindsey?" cried Lydia, sitting stiffly upright, the hand that had toyed with the book a moment before clasping it convulsively now. "Not fatally, Mr. Ballinger?"

"Yes, fatally."

"Who—who could have done such a thing?" Lydia's placidity had fallen away. Her eyes looked dark behind her glasses.

"That's the question that must be solved."

"And they have arrested Larry?"

"Yes, as an important witness."

Lydia leaned toward Kirk, two round spots of vivid red burning on her cheekbones. She seemed suddenly vitalized. "Was he—was Larry present when the thing happened?" she asked.

"No, but he happened to have a picture in his pocket—a portrait that had been cut from its frame by the assassin."

"Ah!" gasped Lydia, and then, "Was it —do you happen to know whose portrait it was?"

"Just a small picture of a girl. The police choose to think that Larry may have cut it from the frame, and, being interrupted by Clarke, attacked him.'

"And you—you think differently? Why?"

"I know differently. Clarke Lindsey was dead long before Larry went to his studio, but for reasons of his own Larry is unwilling for me to tell what I know, just yet. Of course it will come out finally, but for the present he—well, he has a Quixotic notion that it would smirch a girl's name and so——"

Lydia Armstrong made a helpless gesture with her hands.

"I understand everything, perfectly, without your saying anything more, Mr. Ballinger. It is as I guessed in the beginning. Felice Oliver is at the bottom of this tragedy. I knew something of the kind would occur first or last if that girl was allowed to wander around loose. I am only gratified if, as you say, it turns out that some other man, and not Larry, is the principal in the thing."

Lydia let her hands drop heavily into her lap. "It was her portrait, of course, that was cut from its frame?"

"Y-yes," stammered Kirk, marveling that she had guessed it.

"Well, who was the man, this time?" Lydia's voice had a weary note.

Kirk Ballinger flushed painfully. He disliked Lydia Armstrong more than ever. He pretended not to understand the meaning of her question.

"Personally, I am convinced that the man who attacked Clarke was some skulking thief who went to his studio bent on robbery, was discovered by Clarke before he had more than begun operations——"

"I should be inclined to agree with you," interrupted Lydia, "if the picture were some other. But knowing the original and her unfortunate propensity for stirring up bad feeling among men, I am quite sure that the motive for the quarrel between Clarke Lindsey and whoever was responsible for his death, was other than ordinary robbery. Do you know Felice Oliver?"

"I—I have met her," acknowledged Kirk.

"A charming girl," said Lydia, coldly.

"Very," acquiesced Kirk, with what he hoped was disarming nonchalance.

"Very wonderful," went on Lydia.

"In what way?" asked Kirk. Then, following Lydia's eyes, discovered that he was twiddling his thumbs. He thrust his hands into his coat pockets.

"As an example of how unprepared the average woman is for—well, for sex freedom, we'll call it," answered Lydia, with a return to her old appalling calmness of manner.

"She's a mere child——" began Kirk.

"That's it. Just a beautiful, very feminine young girl—the kind of a girl who was kept at home in the old days, and who married at 18 or 20 and lived happily ever after." Lydia's mouth smiled whimsically, but her eyes were serious.

Kirk stared at her, wondering just what she was leading up to.

Lydia seemed to read his thoughts. "I suppose this is no time to go into abstract questions. We must stick to the case in mind," she said. "Tell me what happened, and how Larry chanced to be mixed up in it."

"There's not much to tell," replied Kirk, resolved to protect Felice to the utmost. "Larry had been making me a little visit when he suddenly decided to

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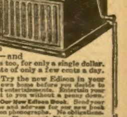

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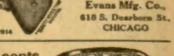

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run up and see Clarke Lindsey. He came down again, almost immediately, with the startling news that Lindsey had been murdered. We went upstairs together, then and—and afterward I went out, leaving Larry to notify the authorities. I returned about an hour later, and to my amazement found that Larry had been arrested. It seems that when he went upstairs he had come upon this portrait of Ma'm'selle—of Miss Oliver cut almost entirely from the frame, and that he had finished the job, fearing that she would become involved in an unpleasant scandal if the police found the mutilated canvas. He had intended to get rid of it, but the officers appeared almost immediately after I left him, having been notified by somebody else that they were wanted at the Kensall building. Things look a bit bad for Larry on account of his having the picture in his possession."

"You say he came back to your rooms almost immediately after going to Clarke Lindsey's? There had not been time for a—a quarrel?"

"Hardly."

"And afterward you left him. How did that happen, Mr. Ballinger?"

"I—I had not dined, and——" floundered Kirk.

"You are holding something back from me. I cannot imagine you going calmly out to eat your dinner and leaving Larry to face this trouble alone. It is very much unlike what I have always heard of you."

"Larry suggested it. Said there was no use in both of us hanging around to wait for the police."

Lydia Armstrong shrugged her shoulders.

"I see you do not want me to know in just what way Felice Oliver is mixed up in this affair, Mr. Ballinger. Perhaps you think I should not understand. I assure you that I would. I understand Felice perfectly—she is the quintessence of impulsive innocence. I do not hold her, but the times, responsible for the harm she does."

"I don't understand."

Lydia sighed impatiently.

"It is very simple. A lot of progressive, thinking women have succeeded in gaining a wonderful new freedom of life, not alone for themselves, but for all women, the majority of whom are not yet ready for it; but, having had it thrust upon them, have accepted it joyfully, and so have become a social menace. For, Mr. Ballinger, the influence of the woman movement has not yet extended to dress and manners. Consequently we find the streets and public places thronged with girls and women in whom the idea has been inbred, thru generations of dependency, that a woman's chief object in life is to be a joy to the eyes of some specific man, and who dress themselves in a way that makes them ravishing in the eyes of all men. I am not a Puritan, Mr. Ballinger. I believe in charming gowns, but in the right place."

As Lydia went on a chill swept Kirk. He recalled the girls he had seen on the street that night, dressed as Felice was dressed. And in picturing her he thrilled at the recollection of her soft throat, of the rosy gleam of her shoulders thru the sheer lace of her blouse. He started to speak, but Lydia went on before a word had left his lips.

"It's hardly fair to you men, Mr. Ballinger, to allow women to go among you, indiscriminately, who pretend to be intellectual Brynhilds, and yet who dress like Helens of Troy. It is these women who are the stumbling blocks in the way of progress. Until we frankly face the question and see to it that the women who take a man's part in the public work of the world neither dress nor behave in the streets and public places in a way to arouse primal dangerous instincts, indiscriminately, there are going to be tragedies like the one of which you have just told me."

She stopped speaking, and removing her glasses, pressed her fingers wearily against her eyes.

"Poor old Clarke Lindsey!" she murmured. "I—I was always very fond of him."

"He was very fond of you, too, I believe," said Kirk, awkwardly.

She smiled, one-sidedly. "Oh, for a little time he felt a sort of head interest in me. It—it might have grown into a heart interest as well, if little Felice Oliver had not yielded to an impulse to caress and mother him just as she did."

She shook her head slowly. "She broke Clarke Lindsey's heart."

Kirk Ballinger's eyebrows went up, questioningly. "Are you sure it was not somebody else who did that?" he asked, studying the face of the woman opposite him.

"Very sure.

"Clarke was fond of me and honored me enough to ask me to marry him, stipulating, when he made the proposal, that I should cease being active in my work. I would not agree to this and we parted. Not long afterward I came upon him and Felice Oliver. She had yielded to some impulse, either childish or maternal, and had taken the man's hand between hers and was caressing it most affectionately. The look on his face was—well—fatuous. No other word seems to describe it. It was pathetic, because the girl was so utterly unconscious of the effect her tenderness had upon him." Lydia paused with a sigh. "All women are potential mothers, Mr. Ballinger, but most of us have learned better than to yield to our mothering impulses in relation to men in general, because of a protecting sex consciousness. Women like Felice Oliver are without this consciousness. They do not realize the disturbing power of their femininity. Those who do and still caress men indiscriminately are wantons. Felice is not that." She leaned her elbows on the table and sat with her chin resting on her clasped hands.

Ballinger looked at her, and suddenly his mental attitude toward her changed. As Larry had said, "She was not unkind; she was only knowing."

"Well," she said at last, "what are we going to do for Larry?"

"I am going to secure counsel for him, and perhaps some arrangement can be made about bail. But before anything else is done he wants me to get Felice out of the way."

"I suppose so. Poor Larry is another victim of her careless caresses. He was with me that day when we came upon her and Clarke Lindsey. It broke him up. He has pretended ever since that he despises her. He doesn't. I have tried to explain to him that she treats all men as she would treat children. Sex plays no part in the matter. Women like Felice Oliver must be taught or locked up." Lydia sighed. "There are too many of them abroad. In the suffrage cause they are like the foxes that gnaw the vines at the roots, using the lure of their beauty and their sex to make converts for the cause, and so bring into disrepute a great progressive movement. You see, not all of them are as innocent as Felice. She is a mere child."

"It is her greatest charm."

"And her most dangerous one. Well?"

"I promised Larry to get her into safe hiding tonight."

"Where is she living?"

Kirk hesitated. Then, "She is spending the night in her own house on Fifty-third street. I think Larry is afraid that if the picture chances to be published a search will be made for her. It would be a very simple matter, of course, to find her if she remained there."

"I thought she had lost the house. Larry said something about a mortgage that had been foreclosed."

"I don't know anything about that. I doubt if the title has yet been transferred. But whether or not—she had the key and she is there tonight. And she hasn't much in the way of clothes—just the little dress she is wearing and a wrap of some kind."

"Where are her clothes?"

"At a boarding-house. Larry and I both think she had better not go there for them. Larry suggested that if she could come to you you would fit her out in something less conspicuous than the frock she has on."

Lydia laughed. "Larry and you seem bent on getting yourselves into a peck of trouble. You are not telling me half of what has happened tonight. But I am not going to insist on full confession. Bring Felice to me. Then do what you can for Larry."

She rose and held out her hand. Kirk Ballinger shook it cordially.

"Good night," he said.

She accompanied him to the door, watching him as he ran down the steps and turned toward Fifth avenue. At the corner he looked back. The door was still open. Lydia's figure, mature, graciously rounded, stood out against the background of light.

Suddenly Kirk understood how men like Clarke Lindsey and Douglas Armstrong had cared for this woman. It was a matter of the head forestalling the heart. While in the case of Felice—the mere thought of her thrilled him. He was going to marry her. She should be surrounded with love and protection. She should be what Lydia said women of her type had been in the past, a joy to the eyes of the specific man, conscious of her sex only in relation to him. She should be a woman of the home, shielded, protected, loved.

If Lydia Armstrong had seen him as he arrived at this decision, she would doubtless have described the look on his face as utterly fatuous.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONFESSION.

IT WAS half an hour later that Kirk Ballinger, having made sure that he had not been followed, turned into Fifty-third street, and half a block farther ran up the steps and rang the bell of the house where two hours before he had left Ma'm'selle Felice.

Upstairs in her white-and-violet-hung room, the dust lying thick on floors and furniture, the girl slept like a baby, her palm under her flushed cheek. There was a suggestion of dried tears beneath her eyes, and the line of her lips was blurred as if she had cried herself to sleep.

Suddenly she started up. A bell had clanged somewhere. She listened. All was silent. Thru the open window she could see the stars and the moon, riding high in the sky. It seemed to her as if she had been asleep for a long time. But it could not be much after midnight. The moon was too high for that. She sank back among the pillows, sighed tremulously, as a child does at the recollection of some hurt, then closed her eyes.

Again the bell pealed thru the house, jangled incessantly. This time she slipped out of bed, wrapped herself in the long cape which she had flung over a chair, and, creeping softly to the window, leaned out and looked down into the street.

In the light from the corner lamp she could make out the figure of a man standing on the steps. His face was turned up as if he had expected her to do the very thing she was doing. She recognized him at once. It was Ballinger—the kindly, middle-aged artist upon whose protection she had thrown herself. It did not frighten her to see him standing there. She did not stop to question why he had come. He wanted to see her, and he had been kind, understanding.

"In a minute," she called down softly.

For a moment Ballinger stood gazing vacuously up at the window, then realizing that his presence on the doorstep of this long-deserted house would look suspicious, should anybody see him, stepped inside the vestibule, closed the outer door and waited for Felice to let him in.

Several minutes dragged themselves away. The air in the vestibule was oppressive, but Ballinger did not mind it. In fact, he had almost forgotten his errand, for he was in a seventh heaven of elation, because, presently, he should again be face to face with Ma'm'selle Felice.

Was that a step on the stairs? He listened, his blood pounding in his temples. Yes, those were her footsteps, coming swiftly with the light elasticity of youth.

A bolt grated in the lock, the door opened, and the next moment she was standing before him, fully dressed, the flickering light from the candle she carried throwing witching shadows on her face. His impulse was to take her in his arms. Perhaps she read it, for she stepped back out of his reach.

"What has happened?" she asked, and the question brought back with unpleasant vividness the events of the past hour, and the recollection of Larry Horner's grim young face as he had last seen it behind the grill of a cell door. Ah, this was no time for love-making! There was serious work to be done, explanations to be made, and then, somewhere, somehow, he must hide Felice.

He crossed the threshold into the hall, closing the door behind him, making sure that the lock caught and held.

"Blow out the candle, Felice," he whispered. "We must risk no interruptions from outside. The house must seem as deserted as ever."

She did as he requested without hesitation. Her unquestioning compliance shocked him into a fuller realization than ever of her need of him, or of somebody, to look after her.

By the light from the street that filtered in thru the cracks between the windows and the drawn-down shades he could still make out the shadowy outlines of the drawing-room furniture.

"Something has happened to—Larry." Felice spoke in a hushed, frightened whisper. "Tell me, quickly, what it is."

"How did you guess?" asked Ballinger, surprised.

"What else could have brought you?"

"A hundred things. But you are right, something has happened to Horner." Then, as she caught her breath in a little moan, he went on reassuringly. "It is nothing really serious—nothing that cannot easily be straightened out."

But the girl was not deceived by the assumed lightness of his tone. She gripped his arm. In the shadowy dusk her face gleamed white as alabaster. Ballinger could hear her quick, troubled breathing.

How tenderly sympathetic she was! And how intuitive! She had guessed what had brought him back to her before he had said a word. That was the woman of it.

He took one of her fluttering hands between his own.

"Larry Horner is in trouble," he said, plunging into the midst of things.

"Oh!" She leaned against him, her face pressed against his sleeve.

He laid his arm about her shoulders and led her to one of the armchairs, ghostly in its white covering.

"There's nothing to worry about. The police who were called to investigate Lindsey's death found the portrait of a girl in Larry's pocket. It had been removed from a frame in Lindsey's studio. On account of it Larry is being held as a witness. It was your picture, Felice."

"My picture!" cried the girl. "I don't understand. You say Larry Horner had my picture in his pocket?"

"Yes, the portrait that Clarke Lindsey painted. He found it cut from its frame and—well, he didn't like the idea of the police coming upon it, and in order to save you from annoyance, rolled it up and thrust it into his pocket."

"How would that save me from annoyance?"

"In a great many ways. Larry hoped to keep it from the police. He figured that if they came upon it, there in Lindsey's rooms they would wonder why it had been cut from its frame. It would look to them like a clew to the motive of Lindsey's murder. They would look you up and ask disagreeable questions. It would probably come out that you had jilted Baylerot. Then they'd question him, and he would tell how he had gone to Lindsey's in search of you and had found your hat and glove. It would look then as if Baylerot and Lindsey had quarreled about you. And—well, there'd be no end of complications involving you. So in order to save you, as he thought, from all this unpleasantness, Larry impulsively stuffed your picture into his pocket."

"I still don't understand, Mr. Ballinger. You say Larry took the picture to save me unpleasantness. That seems absurd because—why, Larry Horner dislikes me utterly."

She pressed her forefingers against her temples.

"It is all very confusing, Mr. Ballinger."

Kirk drew up a chair in front of her.

Time was slipping away. He must find out if Felice knew anything that would help Larry, and then he must take her to Lydia Armstrong. Afterward—his heart raced. He had an absurd idea of getting down on his knees and kissing the hem of her skirt. Ordinary love-making seemed inadequate. Forty-eight years of conventional behavior kept him in his chair. He even smiled at the extravagance of his impulse. He was too old to go thru the antics of exuberant young love—a man with a graying mustache and a rheumatic tendency.

And, too, there was the danger of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of Felice. The joy and flame of youth were in his blood, but he must keep them there and behave with the banal composure of middle age.

"Tell me, Felice," he said, wondering that his lips were framing one set of words while his heart pounded another, "just what happened tonight when you went to Clarke Lindsey's. What was the stain on your glove and how did it come there?"

"I do not know, Mr. Ballinger. As I told you at dinner, I saw nobody in Clarke Lindsey's rooms. After I rapped there were footsteps. I thought they were Clarke's, and when he did not answer, fancied he might be hiding from me. Clarke was always playing tricks.

"Clarke was always playing tricks?" repeated Kirk. "Why, Felice, he was as morose as an Indian."

"When I knew him he was as full of fun as a boy. Of course, just for a little time after Lydia refused him, he was morose. But afterward he was gay again, quite as gay as ever."

"But not recently, Felice."

"He may have changed. I did not see him after our engagement was broken. He probably became melancholy thinking of Lydia."

She paused, her chin on her breast.

"And so you thought it was Clarke Lindsey in the kitchen?"

"Yes, at first, and I tried to open the door. Then I heard the strange sound on the stair landing and ran down to you." She leaned forward and laid her fingers on Kirk's arm. He took them between his palms.

"Yes?"

"Oh, it must have been the man who murdered Clarke Lindsey who was con-

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cealed in the kitchenette when I tried the door!" She shuddered. "And it must have been Clarke himself who moaned."

"Yes, Felice," said Kirk, gravely. "Whoever killed Clarke Lindsey hid in the kitchenette when you rapped on the outer door. What you know would be of great help to Larry Horner. You may have to tell it later. But neither Larry nor I want your name dragged into the tragedy if it can be helped. A witness in a murder case as mysterious as this promises to be would have to face some very disagreeable things."

With a little cry Felice sprang to her feet.

"Oh, I had not thought of that! It would be terrible! My name in the papers, and people staring and saying cruel things! Why, I could not face it! You promised to take care of me, Mr. Ballinger——" Her fingers gripped his arm.

"And I am going to, little Felice. Don't be frightened," said Ballinger, rising and slipping an arm about her waist. "I am here, close at your side, to protect and care for you. You shall always have the refuge of my arms, sweetheart, if you will."

"You are so good to me," she whispered, and nestled against him.

"Dear heart!" he murmured, and pressed his lips to her hair.

Then he pushed her gently from him. This was neither the time nor the place for love-making. There was much to be done, and Lydia Armstrong was waiting. So, in spite of the almost overwhelming desire to keep Felice in his arms, whispering love into her ears, he released her.

"But we must not delay here, sweetheart," he said. "Since they have found your picture it is possible that they will make an immediate effort to locate the original. At Larry's suggestion I have seen Lydia Armstrong. She will fit you out, and then you must go away somewhere to wait until the hue and cry over this tragedy dies down. Larry is as anxious to save you unpleasantness as I am. It was the last thing he spoke of to me before they locked him up."

"Locked him—locked Larry Horner up? What do you mean, Mr. Ballinger?"

"That he has been arrested. I thought you understood."

"No, no! You said he was being held. I—I supposed that meant that he must be where they could find him when they needed him to tell what he knew. But I didn't dream that they had locked him up."

"The circumstantial evidence against him, Felice, is very damning. He may be indicted on a charge of—of manslaughter, or even worse."

"Oh, Mr. Ballinger, then we must do something, at once!" She paused, laid her fingers against her lips, then seized Kirk's arm. "Monsieur de Baylerot—he was in Clarke Lindsey's studio just a few minutes after I left it. Perhaps he saw the man who is really guilty of this terrible thing. Come, we must go to him at once, and ask. It is not very far to Mrs. Bonner's. I will get my hat."

Kirk Ballinger looked at her, amazed. Was this the girl who had told him less than two hours ago that she always slipped from under? He looked at her questioningly, then shook his head. "No, Felice," he said. "I will go to Mrs. Bonner's in the morning, but first I must take you away somewhere, to some place where they will be unable to find you."

"Do you think, Mr. Ballinger, that I would go away and leave Larry Horner locked up just because he would not mention my name, or Monsieur de Baylerot's? No, no, let us go to Mrs. Bonner's at once. I am not afraid."

"But, dear child, you have told me over and over again that you could not face Monsieur de Baylerot."

"But that was before I knew."

"Knew what, Felice?"

"Before I learned that I could face anything, endure anything, if in doing it I could help Larry Horner. Come, let us hurry."

"No, Felice, I cannot permit your getting mixed up in this tragedy. You have given yourself into my keeping, and I am going to protect you, even against your own will. I am not going to allow you to yield to an impulse tonight and regret it all the rest of your life."

"Oh, Mr. Ballinger, you don't understand!" Her voice grew tender. "I yearn over Larry Horner just as the mothers yearn over the babies whose bassinets I make. It has come over me like a great flood as we have stood here talking. I think, Mr. Ballinger, that I love Larry Horner, not as I loved you, and as I loved my father, but as the women one reads about love men and—why, Mr. Ballinger, I seem somehow to belong to Larry Horner!"

Kirk Ballinger thrust his fingers thru his hair. How old he felt, how unaccountably tired and gray. His air castles had come crashing to the ground. They seemed to lie in ruins all about him. Dumbly he stood staring down at Felice, feeling for the moment as if he could not go on with life. He had been a fool, a mad, love-sick fool! And this was the end!

The touch of Felice's hand on his arm brought him to himself again. Her face was close to his. In the half-light that filtered into the room from the street lamps outside, her eyes shone like stars, and in their depths was the look which Clarke Lindsey had put into them in the portrait he had made of her.

In the space of a few minutes, Felice, the child, had become Felice, the woman, ready, determined to sacrifice herself for the man she loved. Never again would she be Felice, the unknowing, the heedlessly caressing.

"I will get my hat and cape," she said. "Then we will go to Mrs. Bonner's."

"All right, Felice," agreed Kirk, wearily. "I will do whatever you say."

This capital story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Hunting the Whale.

A hundred years ago whaling was king in New England. Many stories of whalers and whaling have been written, but no fiction has ever done justice to the courage and daring, the heart-breaking labor, the terrible privations and the heroism which were part of the day's work of the Yankee whalemen—who were really founders of American commerce, says a writer in the Boston Herald.

A. Hyatt Verill's new book, "The Real Story of a Whaler," gives a true and unvarnished idea of the whaleman's life.

In addition to the perils of the sea to which merchant sailors are exposed, says the author, the whaleman faces innumerable dangers absolutely unknown to other seamen, and yet the losses among whaling vessels and their crews were no greater than in other professions of the sea.

Many of the ships went forth time after time on cruises of several years' duration, sailed to the uttermost parts of the world, braved the elements of the frigid and the tropic zones on every sea, held their own most creditably thru several generations of skippers, and are still strong, stanch and seaworthy today. Many an old whaleman sailed forth from New Bedford or some other port in the same ship thruout his long life, and never had a mishap and never lost a man on all his voyages.

One Nantucket captain, over 80 years of age, boasted that in the years he had been whaling—he commenced as a boy—his ship had never touched bottom, that not a man had ever been lost or abandoned his vessel, that no man had ever been off duty over a week on account of illness or injuries, that he had never lost but one spar, that he had never returned without a full cargo of oil, and that he had never passed a day at sea without going aloft himself, save in the heaviest gales.' This man was not exceptional; there were scores, yes, hundreds, who would say as much, for the Yankee whaling captains were unequaled seamen, born navigators, and never shirked their duty; but thru fair weather or foul, thru calm and storm, amid vast icefloes or roaring breakers, courageously followed their quarry round the world and back.

Of all dangers which beset the whaleman, perhaps the least expected was that of a whale ramming the ship itself, and yet this happened many times, and many a ship was sent to the bottom by a maddened whale smashing in her planks with the tremendous force of his massive bulk and enormous strength.

But of all the shipwrecks caused by running onto a whale, that of the ship Union, of Nantucket, Capt. Edward Gardner, is the most noteworthy and interesting.

The Union sailed from Nantucket for Brazil on Sept. 19, 1807, and when twelve days out and while proceeding under easy sail at a speed of seven knots, she suddenly brought up against a whale. The shock was so great that those on board thought the vessel had run onto a rock until the animal was seen and a hasty examination showed that the planking on the starboard bow had been smashed in and two timbers had been broken. The pumps were started, but the water rapidly gained and the crew prepared to leave the ship.

The accident occurred at 10 o'clock at night—it was no doubt owing to the darkness that the whale was not sighted—and by midnight the boats were lowered and pulled away from the sinking vessel. A heavy sea was running and the crew of sixteen men were scattered among three boats. Fearing that the boats might become separated in the darkness, and in order to give more shifts at the oars, one boat was abandoned and the men were divided equally in the two remaining boats, which then headed for the Azores, over 600 miles distant.

By October 2d the men managed to rig up sails, but during the next two days the wind rose to a gale, the extemporized sails were carried away and the two boats were lashed together and allowed to drift. Owing to the haste in which the men left the ship, very few provisions and an insufficient supply of water had been put in the boats, and by October 4th the men were put on rations consisting of but three quarts of water and eighteen small cakes for the whole company for each twenty-four hours.

Starvation was staring them in the face, their thirst was terrible, and their case seemed hopeless, when, on October 9th, they sighted the island of Flores and landed safely after being adrift for seven days and eight nights, during which time they had rowed, sailed and drifted for 600 miles.

Sometimes stories of a "mad whale" were spread among the whalers—tales of some of exceptional ferocity and courage—a whale warrior who destroyed lives and boats and invariably escaped, and when at last some vessel captured such a fighter and identified him by the irons found in his body, the report was circulated among all the whalers far and near.

Such an accident was reported by the ship Hector of New Bedford. In October, 1832, the boats were lowered and started after a large whale, but before they were within striking distance the creature turned, stove one of the boats and threw its occupants into the sea. The captain's boat hurried to their rescue, but the furious, fighting whale dashed at it, seized it in his enormous, armed jaw, and chewed and smashed it to pieces. The mate, struggling in the water, was then seized by the creature, and, altho bitten and chewed and badly wounded, he was finally rescued alive.

* * *

Wants Country Boy.

The Navy recruiting stations are making a bid for country boys, saying that "the rawest kind of a country boy will make the best kind of material."

The general explanation of this assertions, says the Memphis Commercial-Appeal, is that the country boy is physically stronger because of his out-of-door life. But another underlying reason for the desirability of the country lad may be that he is more readily satisfied with the monotony of life on shipboard. He is not accustomed to the excitements and entertainments of the city—the parties, the theaters, the picture shows and the "white lights"—and so he will not miss them out under the stars on the lonesome cruises. Homesickness is not as easily conquered as seasickness, and the boy who has been accustomed to a variety of pleasures is more readily homesick than the one whose life has moved in quiet lines.

One thing about the country boy: he probably takes his training more docilely than his city neighbor, for as a rule he is better controlled at home, and therefore more amenable to the dictates of authority.

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We Give You six large dinner plates, six dessert plates, six large cups, six saucers, six butter plates, six oatmeal or sauce dishes, one sugar bowl, one large oval vegetable dish, one round vegetable dish, one large meat or game platter, one fancy plaque, one fancy bread or cake plate, all in the artistic Wild Rose design, with the initial or emblem in gold on every piece (except cups and saucers) and gold traced around edges.
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Lucky.

"Jimmy Green's a lucky kid."

"Why?"

"He's got parents that don't care how often he goes swimmin'."

Its Right Place.

"Billy is continually talking about his new hat."

"I notice that he has Panama on the brain."

Well Posted

"Do you believe in first aid to the injured?"

"You bet we do. We always keep it in tha house."

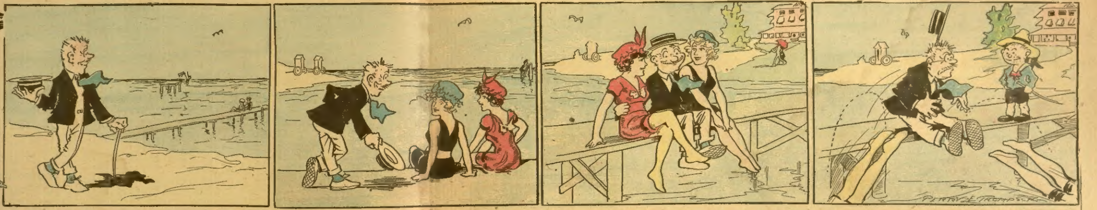
A Deep Dent.

Briggs—"That was a great dance. I hope I made an impression on that girl."

Griggs—"I guess you did. She has been limping ever since."

OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW

A BATHING BEACH BOOB



Hotair Bill—"Gee, there's a couple of female peaches tipping me the inviting eye! I'll go over and chin 'em a while, bein' as the missus is takin' a nap!

"Howdy, girls! You look lonesome out here by yourselves, an' I sure do hate to see anybody lonesome. It ain't healthy, ye know!

"Me married? Why, girls, if I was married I'd be kickin' myself all around the beach after seein' you sweet mermaids——"

Son Willie—"Paw, maw says fer you to come back to the hotel, and come darned quick, or you won't have an ear left on your fool head!"

Problem of Conduct.

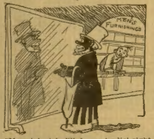
Little Willie came to his mother and propounded the following query:

"Mother, what would you do if some one broke the large vase in the parlor?"

"I would whip him," responded mother.

After a few seconds elapsed Willie said:

"Well, you'd better get ready. Papa broke it."



"Mawnin', sir! I'll do my tradin' right here, whar dey has cullud clerks!"

Those Nine Lives.

Bill—"The invention of electric cabinets for the humane execution of animals has developed the fact that it takes much more electricity to kill a cat than a dog."

Jill—"Yes, but does it take nine times as much?"

Johnnie Warned.

"Mamma, may I have another piece of pie?"

"Why, the idea, Johnnie! You know it is said that in a month a caterpillar devours 6,000 times its own weight in food. You don't want to become a caterpillar, do you?"

Badly Damaged.

Tommy Jones presented a very forlorn appearance as he leaned against the brick wall and caressed his stomach with his hands.

Moans of bitter anguish emanated from his young mouth and the kindly old gentleman whose ears they fell upon was deeply touched. He walked up to the crestfallen Tommy.

"What's the matter, my man?" he asked, "Are you hurt?"

"Yes," wailed Tommy.

"How did it happen?" pursued the old man.

Tommy Jones wiped the tears from his eyes and drew himself up.

"We were having a naval battle," he explained, "and that fellow over there torpedoed me in the engine room."

Breaking the Ice.

"Do you think any girl ever proposed in leap year, as they say, Jessie?" he asked.

"Not unless she was obliged to," answered the maiden.

"Mm! I never thought of that," he said, after a pause.

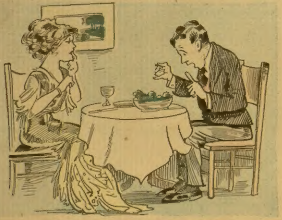
"But, George," she said, laying her hand affectionately on his arm and looking up into his eyes, "you, I am sure, will never force me to that humiliation."

"No—er—that is to say—of course not. I——"

The ice was broken and three minutes later there was a job in prospect for the parson.

A Natural Mistake.

A merchant was visited by a friend and customer from the country whom he entertained by a visit to the theater. When the lights were low, the merchant drew forth a pair of opera glasses and handed them to his guest. A contented "Ah" slipped from the countryman and then his arms in the air were discernible. "What's the trouble?" asked the host. The answer came in a distressingly plain whisper of disappointment: "Oh, nothing, only the thing's empty."



"Look, darling! What's that in the salad?" said he.
His astonishment freely expressing.
"Why, of all things!—a button!" she gasped. "Oh, I see:
Of course, it's part of the dressing."

Used to It.

Mr. Payne started out to enjoy a spin in his motor not long ago. He got on smoothly until he had reached the outskirts of the city, rather far from a car line; then the motor, actuated by motives that only motors know, decided that it had gone far enough. It stopped, and no pulling of levers or turning of cranks was sufficient to induce it to go farther.

After fruitless efforts to get it to change its mind, Mr. Payne climbed from his seat and worked around the machine. Nothing seemed to do any good, and he was rapidly getting into a state that is relieved only by strong language. However the struggles with the motor had attracted a good-sized company of children, and Mr. Payne did nothing worse than think. The children's interest grew as the motorist tinkered. Among them was a little girl with golden hair and deep blue eyes. She crowded close to Mr. Payne as he worked.

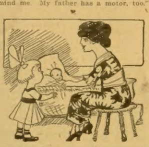
Finally he became so exasperated that it seemed as if he really must say something. He turned to the little girl.

"I wish you would run away, little girl," he remarked.

"Why?" she asked, looking up at him.

Perhaps he wished to tell the truth, perhaps he only wished to see what the little girl would do. At any rate, he said to her, quite frankly, "I want to swear."

"Go ahead," replied the child; "don't mind me. My father has a motor, too."



"Mamma, what is the new baby named?"

"It has no name, my dear."

"Well, how do you know it is ours, then?"

Soon Fell Out.

"So you have been camping with a party of friends?"

"Well," replied the man who tries to speak the truth and nothing but the truth, "we were all amiable enough when we started, but I can't say we were a party of friends when we got back home."

Making It Easier.

Yeast—"The jolt has been taken out of the wheelbarrow by a Maine man who has invented one with springs between the axle ends and side bars."

Crimsonbeak—"It won't be so hard now for a fellow to pay an election bet, will it?"

A Painful Reminder.

"What have you there?"

"A diploma from the school of experience."

"What do you mean?"

"A deed to a gold mine that isn't worth two cents."

A RUDE INTERRUPTION.

Life seemed to him a rocky road,
Its burdens hard to bear.
A modest home was his abode
And while he rested there,

He dreamed of stately piles upreared,
Wherein he fain would dwell,
And swarms of servants who appeared
Each time he touched a bell.

But oft his wife's sharp voice recalled
Him from these pleasant scenes.
Some such command as this she bawled,
"Go pick a pan of beans."

Dilemma.

"What's the trouble?" asked the friend. "You seem to have something on your mind."

"I have," replied the conscientious citizen. "I'm trying to figure out a proper course of action. If I neglect to apply for enlistment my wife will say I don't love my country. And if I display a willingness to leave home and march away to the wars, she'll say I don't love her."

'Twas Raining.

"I see Mrs. Dubwaite walking down the street with Mr. Gadders. There is something up between them."

"You don't mean it."

"Yes, I do."

"Well, what's up between them?"

"An umbrella."

The Handicap.

"Any American boy may become President of the United States some day."

"Yep. Providing he can get all the factions to agree on him."

The Only Way.

A great deal of noise arose in the nursery one morning, and since it gave no promise of subsiding Mrs. Odell hurried in that direction. She found the baby howling with might and main and the new nursemaid sitting calmly by.

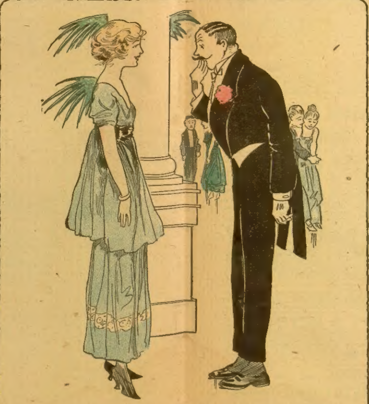
"Well, Della, this is a terrible noise!" cried Mrs. Odell, angrily. "What is the matter? Can't you keep the baby quiet?"

"Shure mum," replied the girl, "but I can't keep him quiet unless I let him make a noise, mum."

When Tabby Purred.

Old Tabby had settled herself leisurely and luxuriously in front of the great parlor stove. Little Alice, who was visiting her aunt that day, regarded her with absorbed interest for a few moments. There was no cat in Alice's home, and when Tabby began to purr loudly in her contentment the little miss ran to the door and called out, loudly:

"Oh, Aunt Edna! Aunt Edna! Come here quick! The cat's begun to boil!"



She—"Who is the prettiest girl at the garden party, Jack? I'd like to see her."
He—"Haven't you got a pocket mirror with you?"

His Purchases.

Little 7-year-old Fred, who lives in one of Zanesville's suburbs, had been ailing, and his mother decided that he needed a dose of castor oil.

Fred was told that if he were to take the castor oil without complaint he would get 5 cents to spend for candy.

Then his mother sent him to the corner drug store with 15 cents—10 cents for the oil and 5 cents for the candy.

Arriving at the drug store, Fred decided to buy the sweetmeats first, and told the clerk that he wanted a nickel's worth of candy.

"What kind of candy do you want?" asked the clerk.

"Gimme the kind you get the most for a nickel," answered Fred.

The clerk complied, and then Fred said, rather reluctantly:

"Now gimme some castor oil. I want the kind you get the least for a dime."

Where Nothing Grows.

A teacher had been doing her best to instill into the minds of her class the meaning of the word desert.

"So, you see, children," she said, "a desert is a great place where nothing will grow. Now, Johnnie Tompkins, I don't believe you were listening."

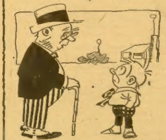
"Yes, I was, teacher."

"And do you know what a desert is?"

"Yes, teacher; a place where nothing will grow?"

"That is correct. Now, give an instance of one of the world's deserts."

"Dad's head, teacher!" replied Johnnie.



"Young man, I hope you never smoke cigarettes."

"Only de mild ones me ma uses. I never tried de kind pa smokes."

No Danger.

Pat was employed by a subway construction company. As he was leaving the house his wife said:

"Do moind yez don't git hurt, Pat. It's so dangerous working in that subway."

"Thot's all roight, Biddy," replied Pat. "I borrowed two dollars from the foreman, and he don't let me do any dangerous work any more."

Another Waster.

Old Lady—"Here's a penny, my poor man. Tell me, how did you become so destitute?"

Beggar—"I was always like you, mum, a-givin' away vast sums ter the pore an' needy."

Many Would.

"The idea is to set the clock back and save an hour of time."

"A good idea, and one which might well be carried further. I'd like to set the calendar back about ten years."

Homesick.

In a certain town a man went into a resturant for his noonday meal and, it being a cold day, the door was closed. He sat down a few tables from the door. Presently another man came in, who neglected to shut the door.

The first man noticed it and yelled to him gruffly: "Shut that door! Were you raised in a barn?" After a few seconds he glanced over to where the man was sitting and noticed he was sobbing. He went over and apologized for talking in such a manner.

"I didn't mean to be so rude in asking you if you had been raised in a barn——"

"That's it—that's it," the other sobbed. "I was raised in a barn, and it makes me homesick every time I hear an ass bray."

Where They Should Rest.

The tragic wife—under the weeping willow.

The punster—under the chestnut tree.

The "young" actress—under the evergreen.

Sweethearts—Under the date tree.

Baseball fiends—under the fan palm tree.

Politicians—under the plum tree.

Grass widows—under the mango tree.

Peace advocates—under the olive tree.

Well dressed men—under the spruce tree.

Old maids—under the lemon tree.

Homely girls—under the plane tree.

Pippins—under the apple tree.

Professors—under the tree of knowledge.

Irish Wit.

Dr. X. hired O'Brien to clean off the walk from his house to the front gate. At the close of the day, when he examined Pat's work, he was dissatisfied with it.

"O'Brien," he said, "the whole walk is covered with gravel and dirt. In my estimation it's a bad job."

Pat looked at him in surprise for a moment and replied: "Shure, doctor, there's many a bad job of yours covered with gravel and dirt."

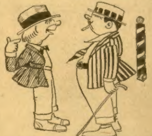
Getting in Wrong.

One of our Belgian visitors has got into a certain lady's black books.

Hearing a little girl called "Kitten," he consulted his dictionary as to the meaning of the word.

Subsequently he was introduced to the young lady's mother, and with a profound bow remarked:

"I think I have the pleasure of addressing the old cat"



"I always go by the motto, 'If you'd have a thing done well, do it yourself.'"

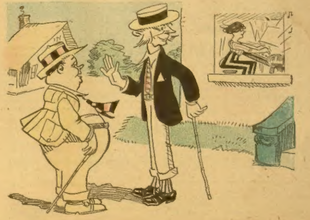
"Yes; but suppose you want a haircut?"

The Two Zones.

While inspecting examination papers recently a teacher found various humorous answers to questions. A class of boys, averaging 12 years of age, had been examined in geography. The previous day had been devoted to grammar. Among the geographical questions was the following:

"Name the zones."

One promising youth, who had mixed the two subjects, wrote: "There are two zones, masculine and feminine. The masculine is either temperate or intemperate; the feminine is either torrid or frigid."



Jinks—"Brown says his daughter is progressing by leaps and bounds in her piano practice!"

Binks—"That's just how it sounds!"

THE EMPTY CARTRIDGE

By Hapsburg Liebe

LITTLE TOM threw a stone that frightened the Widow Seaver's blue-tailed hen from the bed of budding marigolds, looked toward the warm mid-morning sun, and tried to calculate the mean distance between his ever-hungry stomach, and dinner—meaning the noonday meal—caught a fly and pulled one wing off, and laughed at its one-sided antics, whistled like an owl—with two fingers in his mouth—and flipped a bean that struck his grandfather squarely on the nose.

Old Jeremiah Mayfield uncrossed his lanky legs and sat up straight. "You mischeevous little devil, you!" he snapped, with love in his eyes, for that was always his way.

"Is the' anything onpossible with the Lord?" asked the sunburned and freckled, barefooted, calico-shirted and jeans-trousered boy.

"The' hain't—and ye can gamble on it!" said old Mayfield, quickly.

"Wrong, wrong every time!" declared Little Tom. "How about Him a-makin' two hills side and side 'thout nary valley atween 'em?"

Jeremiah frowned at his inquisitive grandson and began to finger in a vest pocket.

"You take this here copper," he said, "and go to the sto' and buy ye some gum-wax to chaw, and le' me alone. I see Bess Allen a-comin' here, and I smell trouble plain. Them Allens and Hendersons has been a-sourin' on each other a long time, and mebbe the's been some powder burnt."

The boy snatched the penny and scurried away toward the settlement's one store, which bought and sold everything from needles and chewing-gum to ginseng, 'coonhides and oxshoes. Old Mayfield rose, jerked down his red-speckled brocaded vest, which was the pride of his heart, and eyed the swiftly approaching Bess Allen over the rims of his spectacles.

I wish you could have seen him standing there on the porch of his old and rambling three-roomed cabin. He looked like—and he was dressed something like—a bluegrass colonel of the old school. He wore a well-twisted gray imperial and well-twisted gray mustaches, a long black coat and a black string tie, a stiff white shirt, gray jeans trousers and high cowhide boots; his hat was broad-rimmed and black, and it flopped a little.

A native-born mountaineer, he was, and the father of his country. He was a doctor, a preacher, and a magistrate. He ushered his people into the world, married them, settled their disputes and buried them. In everything there were two books that guided his judgment—an old leather-bound copy of the Bible, and an old leather-bound copy of Shannon's Code of the Tennessee Laws. There was but one crime that he sent on to a higher court than his magistrate's court, and that was the crime of murder. He was shrewd, and he was just with the justice that has both eyes wide open.

Bess Allen halted when she had reached the porch steps. She was about 20, and the most sought after young woman between the Big Cherokee and the Bald. Never had Old Jerry seen her more calm.

"Better go over and see ef ye can do anything for Burley Henderson," she said, without the turning of an eyelash. "I shot him about fifteen minutes ago with a rifle. And ye can arrest me, ef ye want to."

"You say—you—shot—Burley Henderson! What on earth made you shoot Burley Henderson?" It was hard to believe. He had seen her get out of a trail to keep from stepping on an ant.

"That's what I said," and she slowly nodded.

"You wait here ontel I come back," ordered Mayfield.

He turned, hurried into the cabin, and a moment later came out with an old and worn medicine-case in his hand. He had barely closed the creaking gate behind him when he met Berry Dunn. Berry Dunn was a young fellow, and one of good standing.

"I come to tell you 'at I killed Burley Henderson, Jerry," he said quietly, "and I want to give myself up."

"Who he'ped ye do it, Berry?"

"Nobody, I didn't need no he'p."

Mayfield jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "Go up thar to my house and tell my wife to put ye in jail," he ordered.

Then he set out at a fast walk for the home of Burley Henderson, son of Buck Henderson, faction leader. A crowd had gathered on the porch, and there were many angry whisperings. Most of the men had rifles. Old Jerry knew his people, and he knew that something was about to break loose.

"Whar's Burley?" he asked.

The crowd opened and Mayfield saw Burley. He sat in an old-fashioned rocker on one end of the porch, and except for his deathly pallor he might easily have been mistaken for a sleeping person.

"He's just like we found him," said Buck Henderson.

Mayfield quickly made examination. It was too late for medical aid.

"Who done this, Buck?" asked Mayfield.

"I hain't got no idy," answered old Henderson, "but it looks to me like it's the doin's o' some o' them Allens; I reckon they want to open up the feud ag'in."

"Now don't be hasty, Buck—don't be hasty!" cautioned Old Jerry. "You must rickollect 'at Burley has been a playin' hoss with might' nigh everybody sence he come here from Nawth Ca'liner, and a-threatenin' sev'ral men's lives asides the Allens. Now, don't you do no more'n bat yore eyes and git yore breath, Buck, ontel I l'arn more about it."

He went away with an air of sorrow about him. The going of Burley Henderson, bad man that Burley was, was very sad to him. And yet, he reasoned, it was merely the inevitable end that awaited the man who "played hoss" with other men. There was always somebody, somewhere, his philosophy told him, that could beat a man at his own game. But the person that had taken the life of young Henderson did not stand excused in the old magistrate's way of seeing. His Bible had in it a commandment which read, "Thou shalt not kill," and by his Bible—and Shannon's Code—Old Jerry lived.

Why, he asked himself, as he hastened along the rough and dusty ox-wagon road, had Bess Allen given herself up as the perpetrator of the crime? She had not done it. He knew that. Had she been trying to help Berry Dunn? Had she been trying to clog the wheels of the law until Berry Dunn could make a getaway? But Berry had not tried to make a getaway! And—surely she would not thus jeopardize herself for Berry Dunn. Had it been her sweetheart, Lafe Conley—steadfast as the everlasting hills themselves are these women to the men they love

He found his wife and Bess in the sitting-room when he arrived at the old log house that served him as home, office and courtroom. Bess seemed thoughtful, but she did not appear to be in the least frightened.

He put his medicine-case on the high smoked mantel, and turned to Bess.

"Who he'ped ye kill Burley?" he said, narrowing his eyes.

"Nobody. I didn't need no he'p."

"How many times did ye shoot?"

"One."

"Ah—hum!" and Old Jerry nodded.

Then he went out to the back yard, where there stood a little building of whole logs, which served as the settlement's jail. At one of the small barred windows stood Lafe Conley, Bess Allen's sweetheart; he was talking earnestly and in a low tone to Berry Dunn. Thru the window Jerry Mayfield saw that Berry Dunn was smiling. Conley turned to the old magistrate

"I want to give myself up to the law," he said. "I killed Burley Henderson with a rifle gun."

"Ah—hum!" grunted Old Jerry. "Who he'ped ye, and how many times did ye shoot, Lafe?"

"I never shot but one time, and nobody he'ped me," answered Conley, and his splendid dark eyes seemed truthful

"And how many times did you shoot, Berry?"

"Oncet."

"Well, I reckon that sort o' tallies up," said Mayfield, with a peculiarly shrewd look in his eyes. "The' was three bullet-holes in Burley Henderson, and I could ha' kivered every durned one of 'em with a mule shoe. Wait ontel I git the key, Lafe, and I'll lock ye up to await investigation."

So he locked up Lafe Conley. Then he went back to the sitting-room and took one of Bess Allen's hands.

"It ain't no use, Bess," he smiled. "I've done got Lafe locked up tighter'n durnit."

Bess sprang to her feet quickly and she was pale. Then she quietly walked out of the house and went homeward.

Mayfield took his worn copy of Shannon's Code and went to the front porch. Just as he sat down, Little Tom, his face painted Indianlike, came up.

"Grandpap," he said, "tell me this: Is Kaintuck a settlement, or a county, or a creek?"

"I'm in no mood to argy," snapped Jeremiah. "Here—take this here copper and go on off and le' me alone, you mischeevous little devil, you!"

When the boy had gone toward the store, he began to think and to spit tobacco juice into the yellow eye of a daisy that grew beside the step. Bess had been trying to help Lafe; he had that much. Bess had thought that Lafe would make his escape while she clogged the wheels of the law. Then why hadn't Lafe escaped? Was Lafe trying to help somebody else—Berry Dunn, for instance? Was Dunn trying to help Lafe? The two young men had always been the best of friends, even when they both loved the same girl, which is a supreme test for friendship. It was all puzzling. Finally he rose and, unheeding his wife's call to the noonday meal, went up the road toward Buck Henderson's.

Across a little ravine from Buck Henderson's front porch there was a thicket, and Mayfield believed that the bullet or bullets that had ended Burley's life had come from there. He went, with eyes that took in everything, to the point most promising from an assassin's point of view, and there he found a few dead leaves that had recently been turned over. Then he found a twig that had been broken, as if to make room for a rifle's barrel. He stooped and picked up an empty cartridge, and this he put into one of the pockets of his red-speckled vest. He found nothing else that interested him, and he turned homeward.

By the middle of the afternoon everybody in the settlement knew of the tragedy, and everybody was talking about it. There were many Allens, and many Hendersons, standing in little groups here and there, and each man carried a repeating rifle in the hollow of his arm. It required less than half an eye to see that there would be much bloodshed unless strong and diplomatic measures were taken to prevent it. It would be a wicked fight if it began, a fight without precedent in that section, a fight almost of extermination, with the Hendersons and their many kinsmen on one side and the Conleys and the Dunns and their friends, the Allens, on the other.

The old preacher-doctor-magistrate thought hard and fast. Many, many human lives were at stake. Finally he fell upon a plan that promised something. First he called aside two big men who were fairly neutral in their sympathies, and appointed them deputy sheriffs

"We're a-goin' to have co'te right now," he told them. "It's the only thing that'll satisfy them Hendersons. It ain't a-goin' to be the kind o' co'te you think it is, but——"

One of the two interrupted: "I like this here about as much as I like to play baseball with dynamite and me at the bat! Ef you don't hang Lafe and Berry immejitly, them Hendersons'll start somethin'. The boys cain't git a square deal onder the sarcumstances. I'll tell ye this right here, Ole Jerry: Ef you hain't durned keerful, you'll git yore house shot so full o' holes a half-grown mouse couldn't find a shady spot in it."

"Talk yore fool head off!" clipped in Old Jerry. "You listen to me now, ye busthead. The audience'll have to pass thru the settin'-room, by order o' the co'te, which same is me, y'understand. You two deputies'll stand at the door o' the co'teroom, and you will take each man's shootin' instruments, of whatsoever nacher they may be, offen him as he passes thru. They cain't do no shootin' 'thout guns, can they?"

So it was arranged. Court was opened, and the big, log-walled room was soon filled to overflowing, and each man had been forced to leave all his steel at the door. The two belligerent factions took separate sides of the room. Old Jerry sat behind his bar of justice and eyed them with an eye that missed nothing, and just behind him stood Little Tom, the inquisitive. Old Jerry rapped. There was a silence that seemed breathless.

"Where's the pris'ners?" suddenly asked Buck Henderson.

"The pris'ners is in jail, Buck," answered the magistrate, kindly. He rose to his feet, jerked down his red-speckled vest, and crossed his hands in front of it. Then he went on:

"I want to say a few words, and I will ask you kindly, one and all, to listen to me and not interrupt me. Feller-citizens and gentlemen. Ah—hum! Don't be surprised at nothin' I say. Keep yore heads. It wasn't no Conley, and it wasn't no Dunn, and it wasn't no Allen that killed Burley Henderson. Hold on thar, Buck! The' mustn't be no interruptin' o' the co'te, old friend! I am here to prove every statement I make, lock, stock, and barrel

"Without seekin' to cast any insinnerations ag'inst the character o' the deceased, I wish to impress on yore minds the fact that he whupped half a dozen men in a' inch o' their lives, and threatened to kill several others, and swore he would kill two on sight. The two he swore he would kill on sight was Lafe Conley and Berry Dunn.

"Well, Lafe and Berry loved the same gyrl, as you know, which was Bess Allen, and she loved Lafe. Berry took his turndown like a man. More'n that, he decided to kill Burley Henderson and put their one chancet o' onhappiness out o' the way and at the same time enhance his own safety. He took a rifle gun and went up thar this mornin' to do it, and found Burley already dead! He went to find Lafe, and found only Bess, and when he told Bess 'at Lafe had killed Burley, Bess give herself up to the law to keep suspicion from Lafe ontel he could git

A GREAT DISCOVERY

Swollen hands, ankles, feet are due to a dropsical condition, often caused by disordered kidneys. Naturally when the kidneys are deranged the blood is filled with poisonous waste matter, which settles in the feet, ankles and wrists; or under the eyes in bag-like formations.

As a remedy for those easily recognized symptoms of inflammation caused by uric acid—as scalding urine, backache and frequent urination, as well as sediment in the urine, or if uric acid in the blood has caused rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, gout, it is simply wonderful how quickly "Anuric" acts; the pains and stiffness rapidly disappear.

The very best possible way to take care of yourself is to take a glass of hot water before meals and "Anuric," the discovery of Dr. Pierce of Buffalo, N. Y.

Step into any drug store and ask for a 50c. package of "Anuric," which is many times more potent than lithia and eliminates uric acid as hot water melts sugar. A short trial will convince you.

A NEW WAY To Get Your Clothes Free

Make Big Money During Spare Time

Something Different, bigger, more liberal than any offer ever made. Lower prices better clothes - bigger cash profits Express paid on everything.

Double Pay

FREE clothes and cash besides. We don't ask you to use your cash profits for your own clothes. Ours is a new and better plan. An Extra Present with every order Not a prize scheme. Choose what you want, work for it and get it besides your Cash Profits. Complete Outfit FREE. 56 real cloth sample, 60 Fashion Plates. Inside wholesale prices. Get the big money. Your name on a post card brings everything FREE.

SPENCER MEAD CO., Dept 1006, Chicago

YOUR HEART

Does it Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats? Have you Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness, or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Sinking or Smothering Sensation, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy, Swelling of feet or ankles, or Neuralgia around heart? If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets. Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Probably three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves. Don't take any chances when Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets are within your reach. More than 1000 endorsements furnished.

FREE TREATMENT COUPON

Any sufferer mailing this coupon, with their name and P.O. Address, to Dr. F. G. Kinsman, Box 951, Augusta, Maine, will receive a box of Heart Tablets for trial by return mail postpaid, free of charge. Delays are dangerous. Write at once—to-day.

Painful Swollen Veins Quickly Relieved

Mrs. R. M. Remler, of Federal, Kansas, writes an interesting account of her success in reducing a severe case of enlarged veins that should be encouraging to others similarly afflicted. She suffered with badly swollen and inflamed veins (in fact, one had broken), for more than seven years before she became acquainted with Absorbine, Jr., and used it. Absorbine, Jr., was faithfully applied for several weeks and, to quote from her letter, "The large knots in the veins left, it was all nicely healed, and has not bothered me since."

Absorbine, Jr., is an antiseptic liniment—healing, cooling and soothing. Safe and pleasant to use.

Special Varicose Vein Circular mailed upon request. Liberal trial bottle postpaid for 10c in stamps.

W. F. YOUNG, P. D. F., 337 Temple St., Springfield, Mass.

PIGEONS PAY

Better Than Chickens

[illegible] Big demand in city markets. Each pair of pigeons [illegible] clear $4 per year. Always penned up. Very little space and money needed to start. Free Book explains all. MAJESTIC SQUAB Co., Dept. 67 Adel, Iowa.

FREE BOOK

ASTHMA TREATMENT sent you on FREE TRIAL. If it cures, send $1.00; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. W. K. Sterline, 836 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio

BE A DETECTIVE

Earn from $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. LUDWIG, 120 Westover Building, Kansas City, Mo.

FAT Reduce your weight by a simple method. Full Particulars, etc., mailed FREE in a sealed package to any address. Hall Chem. Co., Dept. A15. St. Louis, Mo.

MAGIC tricks, novelties. Catalog Free. HOMER R. HOWRY Co., Los Angeles, Cal.

WETO GRAPH SECRET WRITING SYSTEM

Invaluable for lovers and for keeping [illegible] addresses, secret memorandum or other information safe and private. No stranger can read your [illegible] if you use the Weto Graph. Great fun for lovers or friends. Don't miss it. Send 10c and we will send the Weto Graph by mail, with full instructions. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

away. Then Berry tried to take Bess' place. Lafe hadn't done it; he thought Berry had done it for him, and he give hisself up as the killer to save his friend. But none of 'em done it.

"Depity," he went on, addressing a big man who stood in the doorway, "will ye please bring me the gun Burley was killed with?"

The deputy brought forward a new blued and snub-nosed automatic pistol, the only weapon of its kind in the house, which took rimless cartridges of the sort that old Mayfield had found in the thicket. A man named Ritter leaped thru a window and fled. Burley Henderson had whipped Ritter the day before. The feud was averted.

Then it was not long before a couple were married.

A Business Letter.

Dan O'Brien got a job on the section working for the B. U. & M. Railroad The superintendent told him to go along the line looking for washouts.

"And don't be so long winded in your reports as ye have been in the past," said the superintendent. "Just report the condition of the roadbed as ye find it, and don't put in a lot of needless words that ain't to the point. Write like a business letter, not like a love letter."

Well, Danny got on the handcar and went along the track looking for washouts. When he came to the river, he stopped the car, and wrote his report to the superintendent in one line:

"Sir: Where the railroad was the river is"

"CHUM" AND OUTFIT FREE

"Chum" is the most beautiful and lovable pony you ever saw; a full-blooded, registered Shetland Pony about 42 inches high and weighing about 300 pounds, just like you see in the picture. With "Chum" we send a complete outfit consisting of pony carriage, nickel silver-mounted harness, saddle and bridle. "Chum" and the entire outfit will be sent to the winner free of all charges. There is nothing to pay for, not even express. We pay everything and deliver "Chum" and outfit right to you

Wouldn't you be the proudest and happiest person in the world if you owned "Chum" and his outfit? You can do it if you will solve the puzzle and mail the coupon now, right away. Think of the fun you could have with "Chum," taking your friends out for a drive or riding him on horseback to school. "Chum" knows lots of tricks now and learns tricks very easily. A real Shetland Pony like "Chum" is the most companionable and friendly pony that you ever saw.

Hundreds of boys and girls all over the country have won these dandy ponies. They won them by starting early. As soon as they saw the advertisement and puzzle they went to work to solve it and so got a great big start in the contest. Don't let any one tell you that you cannot win "Chum" and his outfit, for you get an early start if you answer this advertisement right away.

SOLVE THE PUZZLE NOW AND GET TWO THOUSAND FREE VOTES

To test your quickness, to put you on your mettle and to give you a good running start we are printing the pony prize puzzle shown below. This picture shows two of our friends driving a beautiful pony like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and turning and twisting the picture around you can find them. Can you find them? You will win a prize if you do. Try it. It will pay you.

When you have discovered at least four of these faces mark each one with a cross (X), cut out the picture, send your name and address on the coupon below it and mail it to us. Inclose with it two 2c stamps to help pay the cost of postage and mailing of a special prize which we will send you. We know you will appreciate it and that it will be a big surprise to you.

We will also make you a present of 2,000 Free Pony Votes and tell you all about this splendid pony which we are going to give away with a full set of harness and beautiful pony cart, saddle and bridle. We are also going to give away other prizes for just a little effort on your part.

We want to impress on you that it is very necessary to start at once. It doesn't matter where you live. We are determined to give "Chum" and his outfit to some boy or girl absolutely free, and it may as well be you as any one else. If you don't win, it will be your own fault. We are going to do our part to help you win.

LIBERAL REWARDS TO ALL

This is the most liberal contest ever announced, and it is so arranged that whether you win "Chum" and outfit or not, if you take part in the contest and start off now with the 2,000 Free Votes we give you, we guarantee that you will be richly rewarded for everything, little or big, that you do. Remember, you get the extra rewards right away. There is no waiting or delay until the end of the contest to get your special prizes or cash rewards.

Up here in our big building we have boxes and boxes of golden treasures that are yours almost for the asking. During the contest we will give away hundreds of bicycles, watches, bracelets, flashlights, and many other presents, too numerous to mention. Our plan is so simple that it seems more like a dream than a reality. Everybody gets a prize. We are a big company and delight in giving away expensive premiums to advertise our great weekly papers. Get your share of these presents. Solve the puzzle and mail the coupon now, before you turn this page. Get in on this great prize distribution, and you will be mighty glad.

EASIEST CONTEST OF ALL

Easiest contest devised. Our plan is different from others. There are no losers in this contest, and those who show that they really want to win we are ready to help. Start today and you can win this beautiful Shetland Pony, "Chum," and his outfit without any cost to you.

ANSWER THIS AD TODAY

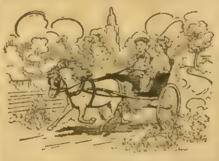
Find at least four of the six partly hidden faces in the puzzle picture, mark each with a cross, fill out the coupon, cut out the picture and coupon and mail it to us with two 2c stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the dandy big surprise present that we will send you. We will also send you a certificate of entry in the pony contest and give you 2,000 Free Votes toward winning "Chum" and his outfit. There are no losers. Every one gets a prize for everything that he or she does and you are not limited to any one prize alone, for you can get many easily—besides, you want "Chum" and his outfit and we are going to help you win it.

DON'T WAIT—DON'T DELAY—MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY ➡

Do not delay another minute, but solve the puzzle and write your name and address on the coupon and mail it to us, inclosing two 2c stamps to help pay the cost of mailing the prize we will give you for solving the puzzle. It is dangerous to delay. We want you to win "Chum" and his outfit, and we will help you if you will show that you are quick. The quicker you are to mail the coupon, the better your chance will be for winning. Mail the coupon right away. Address

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY PONY CONTEST MANAGER Department L
500-514 North Dearborn Street, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SOLVE THE PUZZLE AND WIN A PRIZE



This picture shows two of our friends driving a beautiful pony, like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and by twisting and turning the picture around they will be revealed to you. Can you find them?

YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE

if you do. Try it, don't give up. It will pay you. When you have discovered four of these faces mark each with a cross (X), cut out the picture and mail it to us with 4 cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the prize which you win. We will also send you the Certificate of Entry and **2,000 free votes** in our pony contest and we will tell you all about this splendid pony which we are going to give away with a full set of harness, a beautiful pony cart and also a saddle and bridle. We will also tell you about the other prizes we have for you.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY,
Pony Contest Manager, Department L
500-514 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen:—I have marked the four faces on the picture puzzle which I am sending you together with 4 cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expense of the prize you have for me. Please tell me how I can become the owner of "Chum," with the harness, pony carriage, saddle and bridle, delivered to me absolutely free. Also send me my certificate of entry and 2,000 free votes toward winning "Chum." Let me know also how to earn cash commissions and the many splendid prizes you have for me.

My name is..

Box No.... ...... R. F. D. St. No. or P. O..

Town.... ....

State..

"Betwixt Friends."

Mrs. Royce sat at her desk, a letter before her and a hurt look in her pretty eyes. It was just one of the little stinging things that happen so often, but Mrs. Royce was young and eager to make friends in her new home. She wondered now, bitterly, if there were no such things as friends any more—if they had gone out of fashion like oldtime hospitality.

A heavy step in the doorway made her turn. The new washerwoman stood there, wiping her red arms on her apron.

"The washin's done," she announced, "but the kitchen flure needs moppin' up. Could I do it?"

"Why—I suppose so," Mrs. Royce said. Really, she would be very glad to have the kitchen floor washed, only she had not felt that she could quite afford it. But just then the baby woke, and the baby's mother ran to take her up and forgot all about the kitchen floor. She was reminded of it an hour later when Mary Phelan once more appeared in the doorway.

"The flure's done, and whilst I was about it I jist polished up the stove a bit. And I've taken in the clothes. I'll be over good and early for the ironin' in the mornin'. Ain't that child the purtiest iver, tho!"

"How much do I owe you?" Mrs. Royce asked over the baby's soft head.

Mary Phelan stared a moment in bewilderment; then her big face grew all a confused red, but her eyes met Mrs. Royce's with steady dignity.

"I thought you understood. It's jist $1 for the washin'. Can't I do a thrifle like the flure betwixt frinds?"

Mrs. Royce held out a hand impulsively. "I'm ashamed that I didn't understand. Thank you so much, Mary," she said.

As Mary tramped down the stairs, Mrs. Royce stood still, thinking. If she had been so stupid about the friend at her door, was it not possible that other people, too, were just thoughtless—not intentionally unkind? She picked up the note she had written.

"We're going to write another answer, little daughter," she whispered to the baby. "We are not going to be smaller than Mary Phelan, friend!"

* * *

When a man has so much money that it troubles him, he can easily find some woman who is only too glad to share his troubles.

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

AGENTS WANTED

EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL TOWN or suburb, needs and will buy the wonderful Aladdin kerosene (coal oil) Mantle Lamp. Five times as bright as electric. Tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading Universities. Awarded Gold Medal. One farmer cleared over $500 in 6 weeks. Hundreds with rigs or autos earning $100 to $300 per month. No capital required; we furnish goods on time to reliable men. Write quick for sample lamp for free trial, distributor's proposition and secure appointment in exclusive territory. Mantle Lamp Co., 607 Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

$1,000 PER MAN PER COUNTY—STRANGE invention startles world—agents amazed. Ten inexperienced men divide $40,000. Korstad, a farmer, did $2,200 in 14 days. Schleicher, a minister, $195 first 12 hours. $1,200 cold cash made, paid, banked by Stoneman in 30 days; $1[illegible] to date. A hot or cold running water bath equipment for any home at only $6[illegible]. Self heating. No plumbing or waterworks required. Investigate. Exclusive sale. Credit given. Send no money. Write letter or postal today. Allen Mfg. Co., 253 Allen Bldg., Toledo, Ohio.

SOAP AGENTS MAKE MORE MONEY selling Linro Products. Coffee, Flavorings, Spices, Soaps, Perfumes—135 other items. Big commission. Exclusive territory. Freight allowed. Free sample Case. No deposit required. Write for catalog today. Linro Company, 75 Linro Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS — STEADY INCOME. LARGE manufacturer of Handkerchiefs and Dress Goods, etc., wishes representative in each locality. Factory to consumer. Big profits, honest goods. Whole or spare time. Credit given. Send for particulars. Freeport Mfg. Co., 52 Main St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

Conceited women are seldom jealous

No pessimist enjoys life unless he doesn't

Love and reason are seldom on speaking terms.

Cupid is a good shot, but he bags some poor game.

When a man is paid for playing he calls it work.

Love and hate have good memories; indifference forgets.

A man is often luckiest when he fails to get what he wants.

No man knows what it is to be a woman—and he is glad of it.

Most people are good nurses when it comes to nursing animosity.

Fortunately for the average man his brains are not on exhibition.

A girl likes to listen to soft nothings —when they mean something.

Don't count your chickens before they are big enough to bluff the cat.

It's a waste of time to tell hair-raising stories to bald-headed men.

Never meddle with a hornet or a man who is minding his own business.

A stuttering man may be truthful even when he does break his word.

Most people have taking ways—but very few have bringing back ways

The conceited woman who is always saying "Dear me!" usually means it.

Like attracts like; an empty purse usually goes with an empty stomach.

A woman's idea of an entertaining man is one who says nothing and listens.

If a girl knew how pretty she doesn't look when she cries she wouldn't do it.

If a woman doesn't want the last word it is because she wants to keep on talking.

Peekaboo waists and open work hose no longer attract attention—of blind men

When it comes to stepping into a fortune any man is willing to put his foot in it.

No work is so well done as that which his satanic majesty finds for idle hands to do.

It's easier to imagine that the world owes you a living than it is to prove your claim.

Honor compels us to tell a man his faults to his face. But, "safety first"— use the telephone!

No man ever realizes how attractive his home is until he gets a real estate dealer to sell it and reads the description.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

There are many smart small sailor hats worn.

Everything must flare—coats, basques and skirts.

Tatting is an attractive finish for children's frocks.

All colors of leather trimmings are used on garments.

A lingerie set of picoted chiffon consists of drawers and chemise, forming points at the knees of the wearer.

Sets for the beach include a bathing hat and small bag of rubber and silk to match. Sometimes the bag is long enough to hold the bathing costume, and sometimes bag and cap are combined in one.

That skirts are to be longer will be a great relief to many and a sad blow to the woman with trim ankles. Yes, they are to be but a paltry five inches from the ground, and after the ten we have grown accustomed to they will make us all appear most unusually modest.

■

RECIPES.

ROLLED APPLE DUMPLINGS—Peel and chop fine tart apples, make a crust of one cup of rich buttermilk, one teaspoon of soda and flour enough to roll. Roll half inch thick, spread with apple, sprinkle well with sugar and cinnamon, cut into strips two inches wide, roll up like jelly cake, set the rolls in a dripping pan, putting a teaspoon of butter on each. Put in a moderate oven, and baste them often with the juice.

MAPLE CUSTARD—Beat five eggs; stir into them one cupful of maple sugar, one tablespoonful of flour, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one-quarter teaspoonful of nutmeg. Stir all this into two quarts of lukewarm milk. Pour in baking dish; bake in a moderate oven until custard is set—that is, firm in the center. This recipe makes a great deal of custard, but one can always cut down the amount of ingredients if desired.

DROP CAKES—Cream half a cup of butter, add two cups of brown sugar, four well-beaten eggs and half a cake of grated chocolate; sift and add two cups of flour with a rounding teaspoon of baking powder, half a teaspoon each of cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg and half a pound of chopped walnuts or pecans Drop on a baking sheet or the bottom of an inverted dripping pan, well buttered in teaspoonfuls, and bake in a moderate oven about eight or ten minutes.

SPICED PINEAPPLE—Use the Florida pineapple. The small-sized ones are more convenient for slicing; the large slices must be cut in halves or in quarters. Cut the slices thin and cover with a sirup made of two pounds of sugar to a pint of vinegar, with spice tied in cheesecloth bags. Let stand over night. Next morning drain off all the sirup and boil up well and again pour over the fruit. Repeat this for two following mornings and then seal up the fruit.

■

HEALTH NOTES.

Soaps, ointments and creams will not help your complexion; the cure must come from within. Be careful of your diet, get lots of fresh air and exercise, drink plenty of water, and guard against constipation.

Olive oil is good for a torpid liver; so is the unsweetened juice of a lemon. Take a tablespoonful of the oil about an hour before breakfast and one at night. If you prefer, the unsweetened juice of a lemon can be taken instead in a glass of water before breakfast.

To make thin cheeks plump, rub skin food in with the following movements: To treat the right cheek place the thumb of the left hand just beyond the corner of the mouth on the left cheek as a brace. Make rotary movements upward and outward, beginning at the corner of the mouth and making three diverging lines of manipulation over the cheek. With the right hand treat the left cheek About six times over each cheek is sufficient.

An excellent lip salve for ordinary use is the old-fashioned camphor ice. Glycerin should not be used in any case. It has too great an affinity for water and is too drying, while the camphor ice is cooling and healing. In aggravated cases, after applying the latter for two or three nights, change to vaseline treatment and then, having reclaimed the lips so they have firmness, keep them in good condition by drying them properly and by keeping the tongue away from them.

■

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

To use sour milk for griddle cakes, never add baking powder, but instead an even teaspoonful of baking soda to each cup of milk

A tablespoonful of sweet butter melted and poured over the tomatoes while boiling hot, just before sealing the can, gives the tomatoes a fine flavor and helps preserve them

Rice heated and placed in a salt shaker will absorb the moisture and prevent that sticky condition of the salt which every housekeeper deplores. Half a teaspoonful is enough for a shaker of the average size.

Every housewife should have an asbestos glove to wear in handling pots and pans that are hot. This convenient glove would save many burns, for even if a pot holder is hung conveniently close to the kitchen stove it is always out of place when something is boiling over and quick action is necessary

■

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

So many times the home sewer forgets that many of the smaller trimmings she can make herself at a great saving of her dress allowance. This is particularly the case with tassels. This small trimming is stylish this year, and a great number of fancy tassels of odd materials are being shown on new frocks

It is not a hard matter to make a tassel. For a silk or wool or chenille tassel wind your strand of silk or wool around two pegs or pins a little more than twice the distance apart of the length you wish the tassel to be. Gather the skein together in the middle and tie it temporarily with thread. Then detach the skein from the pegs, and wind your doubled strands just below the temporary tying. Then cut the doubled ends and your tassel is complete

For beaded tassels, which are considered stylish, a different method will have to be employed. The beaded strands of silk, not beaded too closely, will have to be carefully measured, as they cannot be cut after doubling. A large bead may be used for the head of such a tassel and each thread threaded thru this large bead and all tied together in a large enough knot.

Narrow ribbons can be made into tassels in the same manner as silk or wool threads. Strips of leather can be treated in the same way.

Even ostrich fronds, beaded, occasionally are formed into tassels. Infinite care at the hands of an amateur might accomplish such a tassel from an old willow plume.

■

TO CLEAN CLOTH.

To clean white velvet or broadcloth hats, white plumes, etc., mix one-half cup borax, one-half cup flour, one-half cup cornmeal. Lay article to be cleaned on a newspaper, rub mixture well in, brush it off and repeat several times, then lay it away for several hours or overnight, covered with the mixture. Brush it all out well and you will be surprised at the result

■

COVERING FOR DRESS.

Five yards of paper cambric, cut in two strips two and one-half yards long, will make a suit cover; join by selvages; lap over the other two selvages and button down the front. Cut a flap at the top and button over crosswise, envelope shape. Make a small opening at the top, thru which the coat hanger or skirt tapes can pass to hang by. It keeps your suit or light dress from the dust and is too light to crush them.

■

BEAUTY HINT.

The complexion brush should be used on the neck once a day. A soap may be used or a meal. A cleaning cream should be massaged into the skin on retiring and before going into the open for sun exposure. A good liquid that acts also as a cleansing agent and astringent and gentle bleach should be daily applied. The entire surface of the neck should be covered, going around the hair line and back of the ears, rounding out the treatment so that it will include any collar style.

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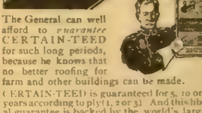

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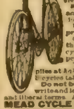

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The Fairy Corner

THE SLEEPY LITTLE SISTER.

I sat, one evening, watching
  A little golden head
That was nodding o'er a picture-book,
  And pretty soon I said,
"Come, darling, you are sleepy,
  Don't you want to go to bed?"
"No," she said, "I isn't sleepy,
  But I can't hold up my head.

"Just now it feels so heavy
  There isn't any use;
Do let me lay it down to rest
  On dear old Mother Goose.
I shan't shut up my eyes at all,
  And so you need not fear;
I'll keep them open all the while,
  To see this picture here."

And then, as I said nothing,
  She settled for a nap;
One curl was resting on the frill
  Of the old lady's cap;
Her arms embraced the children small
  Inhabiting the shoe;
"Oh dear!" thought I, "what shall I say?
  For this will never do."

I sat a while in silence,
  Till the clock struck its "ding, ding,"
And then I went around and kissed
  The cunning little thing.
The violets unfolded
  As I kissed her, and she said,
"I isn't sleepy, sister,
  But I guess I'll go to bed."

⁂

RUGS AND ROSES.

It was a glorious day and Ronald Winfield was humming a bright air with no thought of self-pity because of his tasks, but Remington Rae did not know this when he called out sympathetically:

"Hello, I'm no end sorry you're having such a beastly afternoon. I'm just back from the woods. It's a long tramp and nothing worth while today. Tired as anything and dusty as a country buggy! But that's nothing to staying home and beating rugs. Why don't you get a vacuum cleaner? Everybody with any regard for health or cleanliness has one or will have soon. Just clutches the dirt in your rugs and lifts it right out. Keeps them clean, too, all the time, instead of having spasms of cleanliness. Doctors and veterinary surgeons recommend it for keeping the house in sanitary condition.

"Biggest boon to gardeners. Simply empty the dust taken from the rugs on the cornfield or potato patch. No other fertilizer needed.

"Women possessing this marvelous invention are organizing new civic and literary clubs, as they have more time now than they know what to do with. And the children—they cry for it. It is so light in action that they beg to run it in place of playing games.

"Those who have tried the vacuum once declare that life without it is not worth living. If you can't afford both a cleaner and a piano, I would advise you by all means to get the vac. Adds years to your life."

"When do you expect to go out as traveling salesman, Rem?" asked Ronald, laughing immoderately at his friend's amusing take-off of a vacuum cleaner demonstrator in their town.

"Well, old man, all joking aside, the thing is a good deal more than I've said. If you think you're clean—I mean your rugs and carpets—before you get one of these machines you're mightily mistaken. I guess some women feel like going into hiding after the first trial of the vac. on their broomswept rugs. Mother did, and you know she's considered an immaculate housekeeper.

"But I'm sorry, Ronald, you had to poke around here all afternoon swinging a carpet beater and seeing nothing but flying dust."

"Oh, you needn't waste any sympathy on me. I've had a jolly good time—better than you have had, according to your own story. Really, the dust didn't worry me, at least, after I decided that it would be foolish to carry a grouch because I couldn't do what I wanted to do. You know, Remington, how crazy I am about things that grow and fly and smell woodsy?"

Remington nodded.

"Well, I made up my mind after I'd downed a silly temper, to get acquainted with our back yard.

"It's great," observed the visitor, looking around him with renewed interest.

"Mother's chief gardener. She has planned everything since father has gone. But I'm going to do my share after this.

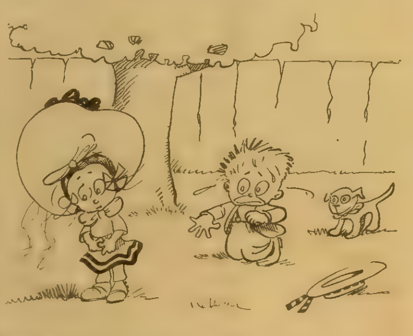
"While it's mighty fine to go where there are no man noises—nothing but you and the woods, the birds, brooks and little animals and the wild things growing—if you've the right sort of back yard you can find nearly all the entertainment you want, and this afternoon I made up my mind I'd have a good time, woods or no woods."

"Well, out with it. What did you do?" asked Remington, with some impatience, as Ronald paused in meditation.

"Maybe you'll laugh—but, pshaw! What do I care?" And Ronald braced himself as he continued:

"First of all, you see this carpet beater looks like a near cousin to a tennis racket and with a little imagination to make it seem like the real thing I had a jolly good time for a while. I felt all right and the rug didn't suffer either. In fact, I'm sure the work was better done for mixing with it a little cheer. I was getting exercise, too, not only with the right arm, but the left, as well.

"Just as I was becoming a little tired of 'tennis' a breeze sprang up, and I caught a whiff of something nicer than you'll ever find in one of those cut glass green and lavender labeled bottles that girls keep their scent stuff in. I wasn't long in discovering that it was roses. Look at them over there in the corner, 200 at least, on the bush. Aren't they yellow beauties? Sweet brier roses, mother calls them. They were a feast until another odor, like honey, came. Do you remember, Remington, the book we read last winter about Persia and her flowers? Well, this new fragrance, mingled with that of the roses, made me think of what a Persian garden must be like. Don't you get the scent of the sweet locust? It's delightful.



She—"Arise, Mortimer; kneel not to me—"
He—"Gee! I can't rise. My suspenders is busted."

"Some one near by cut grass, too, and I've enjoyed the odor almost as much as I would if I were out in grandfather's new-mown hay field.

"These were not all the delights of the afternoon, tho. For the first time I really saw in our garden rows and rows of miracles—life springing from dry, dusty-looking little brown seeds and expressing itself in wholesome vegetables for our use and beautiful flowers for our pleasure.

"And music! Remington Rea, you'll never hear anything more pleasing than I have today. The bees have been humming like they were the happiest things living, and I've been wondering if I'll get any of that particular honey they were making to the accompaniment of their drowsy song. I heard a bellbird over there in the elm tree, a catbird back in the shrubbery, and a cardinal out in the cherry tree. Also a pair of wrens have decided to move into the little house that I put up in the poplar tree over in the vacant lot, and Mr. Wren has been singing all the afternoon, except while he and Mrs. Wren have been discussing the best way to build a nest and rear a family, so I can't see how I've lost anything by staying home, as I should, to help mother."

Ronald stopped, and Remington broke the silence after a moment by saying, half-seriously, half-smilingly:

"Rugs and roses; any fellow who can put them together as you do and have a jolly good time, whatever he does or wherever he goes is worth while. I'm going to try it, old friend of mine. But there's no harm, after all, in having a first-class vacuum cleaner!"

"Good-by," and Remington swung off at an easy gait, repeating "Rugs and roses, rugs and roses. The disagreeable things wouldn't seem so hard, I suppose, if we'd think more about roses."

⁂

SURE OF VENGEANCE.

Papa—"Well, Charlie, what would you like to be when you get to be a man?"

Charlie—"A policeman."

Papa—"Why do you want to be a policeman?"

Charlie—"I want to arrest Johnny White some day for stealing my new ball."

SUSAN AND THE FEATHER.

Susan Sibley found a feather.
"Ha!" she said, "I don't know whether
I will take it to my mother
Or go tickle little brother!"
As she thought it didn't matter,
Little Susan did the latter.
When she tickled Little Jim,
All she did was laugh at him;
Still the strangest thing you've read of:
Little Jimmy sneezed his head off.

⁂

BOYS IN BUSINESS.

The American Boy says that "boys are the backoone of the wintergreen oil industry," because it is they who pick the wintergreen leaves and take them to the distilleries where the oil is distilled. Over 90 per cent of all the wintergreen oil produced in the world comes from Monroe County, Pennsylvania, where the wintergreen plant is plentiful. The plant is only three inches high, and it is almost as backbreaking a process as picking strawberries is, to pick fifty pounds per day, which is a day's work for a nimble boy. There are said to be about 500 of these "wintergreen boys" and they work every day from April to November, picking the leaves, making them into bales and carrying them by pushcarts to the "stills." These boys could tell us much about rattlesnakes, but they have trained eyes and ears so well that it is a rare thing for one of them to be bitten.

⁂

A DOG'S FIRST AID.

Kelly is an Irish setter belonging to a farmer and stock raiser in Idaho. One evening his master took Kelly and set out for a friend's house by a short cut across the ice. He had gone only a little way when the ice gave way and he slipped into the water. As fast as he tried to pull himself up the ice broke, and so it did when Kelly tried to help by tugging at his master's clothes. After a few minutes' struggling the man succeeded in getting a good hold on the ice, and then he bade Kelly go for help. The dog lost no time in returning to the place where his master had last visited and by his yelps and frantic actions he convinced some persons that assistance was necessary. Then he led the way to the spot where the well-nigh exhausted man was, and after the rescue was accomplished he expressed his gratitude and pleasure in every way possible to a dog.

⁂

OBEDIENCE.

The soldiers were dining and orderlies were hastening back and forth with pails of steaming soup. Wolseley stopped one of them and ordered him to remove the lid of his pail. The man obeyed promptly, and the General said: "Let me taste it." "But——" began the orderly. "Let me taste it, I say," exclaimed the general. "It's for all the world like dishwater." "That's what it is, sir," said the orderly, saluting gravely.

⁂

CAN GEESE TALK?

A Kansas farmer is certain that geese have some way of communicating, and he tells the following incident to prove it: He has a number of geese that use the same nest in a cattle-shed. One morning two of the geese were on the nest when a turkey hen came along, drove them off and appropriated it. The geese waddled off, around the shed to where the gander was standing, and in a minute or two the whole bunch of geese, headed by the indignant gander, returned to the nest and the turkey hen. The old gander reached down, nipped the turkey and literally lifted her from the nest, and the two geese took her place. Now if the old gander wasn't told the trouble, why did he come to the aid of his mates?

⁂

BIRDS OF A FEATHER.

One day two little boys came very late for school. The teacher said to them, "Come to my desk, boys." And the boys came to the teacher's desk, looking at him as if they were going to cry. These boys' names were John and Benjamin. They were very good boys.

And when they came to the teacher's desk the teacher said to John, "Why are you so late?" and John said to the teacher, "I overslept myself, teacher, and I dreamed I took a journey to New York, and just as I got to the station I awoke."

And the teacher said to Benjamin, "Why are you so late?" and Benjamin said, "I dreamed that I was standing by the station waiting for John."

⁂

A GOOD REASON.

One night when there was a heavy thunderstorm in Chicago the family were telling stories and the schoolteacher member remembered this one: One day a teacher was trying to keep the children from being frightened during a thunderstorm by talking to them about the wonders of air, electricity, etc.

"And now," she said, "can you tell me why lightning never strikes twice in the same place?"

"Because," said Jimmy, confident that he was right, "after it has struck once, the same place ain't there any more."

⁂

ALMOST.

"Pa," said little Jimmie, "I was very near getting to the head of my class today."

"How was that, Jimmie?"

"Why, a big word came all the way down to me, and if I could only have spelt it I should have gone clean up to the top."

⁂

HAD BEEN DYED.

Edgar, aged 5, was driving from the station on his first visit to Maine. His mother, noticing a troubled look on his face as he looked about, said:

"What's the matter, dear? Don't you like the beautiful country?"

"Yes, mother, but on my map Maine is red."

⁂

EASY.

Mother (annoyed)—"I don't see, Elsie, how you can be so naughty."

Elsie—"Why, mamma, it isn't a bit hard."

⁂

BOBBIE'S WISH.

"I wish some man would make a top
  That, when 'twas spun, would never stop."

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

FEEL YOUNG AGAIN.

No Need for Anyone to Feel Prematurely Old.

Age is not entirely a matter of years. A man of 60 may feel and act as youthful and sprightly as a young fellow of 25, with erect carriage and springy step, radiating good cheer, good fellowship and joviality. On the other hand, a man of 30 may feel old and worn-out, with drooping shoulders, dull mind and leaden step, morbid and melancholy, full of pains, aches and stiffness.

Time was when we always used to look to drugs and medicines for relief. Today we know that there isn't much use in outraging our stomachs with pills, powders and other nauseating concoctions. We turn to Nature to help us get back our vim, strength and endurance.

There is a great unseen force about us all the time, which thousands have turned to their advantage when feeling old and rundown in health. A simple little device worn about the body at night while sleeping enables anyone anywhere to bring this force into action. The expressions of joy and gratitude are astonishing: Ernest H. Kretzman, 41 Oakland St., Brooklyn, N. Y., writes: "It made me feel 20 years younger." J. T. Brockman, Allen, Ky., says: "Am feeling like a boy again." M. F. Myers, Lakefield, Minn., "Am 53 years old, but look not over 35." Frank Halker, High Point, N. C., says: "Am 56 but do not feel older than 25." Scores of others write in a similar vein.

Put your name and address on a Postcard or in a letter and drop it in the mail box. You will receive soon a nice little booklet, and a lot of other interesting matter explaining all about it. Don't send any money or stamps. This is something every ailing person ought to known about, so everything is sent free. Address The Herculex Co., Dept. W, 1416 Broadway, New York.—Advt.

Eck Lowrey's Luck

Or, In Quest of Douglas Beechmere

By I. M. Shepler

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Begun in No. 36, August 26. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER III.

ECK GETS THE WHIPPING.

JIM LOWREY had his excellent traits as well as those which easy-going Ralph spoke of as "Jim's way of having fun," and Eck as simply "poor brands of treachery." Eck and Jim, secretly, had never hit it together because they were so unlike in character, and that which was bad in Jim's makeup he somehow had ever managed to convince his grandfather belonged to Eck instead of himself. Eck, who was high-spirited, often resented this, but to no avail, he finally concluded, for his grandfather thought Eck's outbursts for justice simply outbreaks of high temper. It was fast driving Eck into the desire to cut all home ties and get away from Jim's proximity.

Jim was industrious and he was quick-witted. He had come out of high school at the age most boys graduate from grammar school. He had gone away to a college one term since, and after harvest was going back for another year; after that he was going to study law.

Because he was bright, grandfather had suggested that he study for the ministry, but Jim passed this by without a thought. "Then be a doctor," suggested grandfather. Again Jim shook his head. He would be a lawyer or nothing, so grandfather had consented.

"Didn't he choose the very proper calling for himself?" Ralph asked Eck. "He's the very lad can be standing on both sides of a fence same time he's dancing on its top rail."

Eck would finish high school that year, but no one could guess when Ralph would get thru, for he was as deliberate in study as in all other things.

A few mornings after the meeting at the Squire's, a large, prim-visaged woman drove a little phaeton, groaning under the load of its driver, alongside of Eck as he tramped down to the village to school ahead of the slower Ralph.

"What's this I'm hearin' of your doings of late, Alexander Lowrey?" she began severely. "I told father, over and over, the way him and that soft-headed Susie he keeps there were indulging you and Ralph, you'd end yet in bringin' disgrace on all of us. What's this you and that red-head McComb boy been settin' up on poor half-witted Del Smith?"

"Nothing," and Eck looked up quickly into his Aunt Martha's accusing countenance.

"Nothing! Don't call it nothing!" she snapped. "My Tommy told me all about what they are saying downtown over you and Donald McComb. A fine lot you two, a preacher's and a church elder's son and grandson, indulgin' in stealin' scrapes, then fightin' about it in the holy church. Then, when your respectable fathers and grandfathers are called before the law on your account, you make up between you, you two young sharpers, to put it all on a boy most folks call half-witted at times!"

Eck gasped and wondered if they really were telling this: but then his Cousin Tommy was considered a blowhard. He hurriedly answered, starting away, as tho fearing to hear more lies: "You tell Tom that I'll see him later about that falsehood he's packed home to you, Aunt Mat."

"Jim's the only one of you boys who tries to be a gentleman and behave himself!" she flung after Eck.

"Aunt Mat will tell that to grandfather and get him all upset again!" Eck fairly groaned as he trudged on to school. "I guess a person's better sometimes far off from most of his relations."

Coming up to Ralph and Willie, their aunt drew off to one side of the road and stopped the boys, pouring out much the same complaint that she had just made to Eck.

Each listened quietly, Ralph in his stolid way, Willie nervous and impatient. It hurt him to hear his good, kind mother spoken of as the prime ruination of children because of her easy, loving way with them.

Ralph let his aunt run herself down, then spoke his piece by telling her that her son was the worst boy the country around, and everybody knew and thought so but herself, and ended by saying that she and his uncles—at least some of them—helped out by Jim, would keep on until they caused Eck to leave home.

Eck was building nothing on going to college. He wanted to be a farmer, and with his brothers began helping his grandfather on the farm as soon as he was old enough to stand on the manger and bridle a horse. Elder Lowrey often insisted to his children that these grandsons much more than paid their way. Eck often talked to Ralph about going West some time, but put it in some far-off day. Hence the latter's fear was not without some foundation.

Corn planting was over, and the earliest planted fields were coming checker fashion in green. One field, however, refused to show the right amount of green. Something had destroyed the seed.

One beautiful but very hot morning, the four Lowrey boys invaded this field with shelled seed corn and hoes. Glancing over the big field Eck remarked:

"Take us humping all day to finish replanting this field."

"No such thing!" Jim's tone was bossy and arrogant. "It's got to be done by three this afternoon, for I am going away early this evening. Hear me, you larks? No dragging back today. Willie, stop that dragging your feet. You make me tired when you put on that languid sheep stare."

"Well, we will do the best we can without slighting the work," was Eck's answer. Then to Willie: "I say, kid, you'd better stayed at home and helped Stepmother Susie until that headache got here, for I can tell by your eyes it is coming."

"I know it is, too," whispered Willie, "but Eck, Jim told me I had to come—he said that I pretended headache to get out of work. Oh! if he only had it once like I do, he'd never say that again, would he?"

All the forenoon thru Eck kept Willie close to his row, and helped him out. At the noon hour it was easily seen that Jim was not pleased with the amount of work done so far, tho the boys, even to Willie, by Eck's aid, each did his fastest. By two o'clock, Willie's headache was raging, and Eck forced him to go and lie down in the cool of a thicket. Jim, working in another part of the field, came over to inquire where the boy had gone. Eck would not tell him, but said:

"If you've made arrangements to go at three, why, go. Ralph and I can finish this ourselves, if we have to come back after night to do it."

The thicket was but a clump of thorn bushes in a fence corner, and presently Jim, spying a movement there, went over to it and dragged Willie out, pale and suffering, and ordered him to get to work.

Fighting, even so much as disputing between these boys, Elder Lowrey had sternly put down, even forcibly, quoting the oft-reiterated story of Cain and Abel. Out of his sight, boylike, they had their disputes, but never had one laid a hand in anger upon the other. But now, under Jim's impatience to get the work done, and Eck's insistence that Willie go back to his bed, a fight seemed imminent. However, Ralph, backing up in belligerent manner on Eck's side, brought down Jim's right hand, which had been raised in a threatening manner. It was not likely that he was any match alone for Eck with Ralph at his back, so Jim finally considered a retreat the better part of valor in this, and desisted, leaving Willie trying to work, with both brothers remonstrating with him because of his attempt.

Finally they coaxed Willie to go back to his cool bed, where he presently fell asleep, not awakening until the supper bell was ringing. Then Ralph told him that the field was all replanted and to come on home.

Silently they all took their way, Jim sulky because of his spoiled arrangement, whatever it was. To let off spite somehow, he gave Willie's ears an occasional tweak, the little fellow trying to bear it without an outcry; but as they approached the big barn, Eck, looking back, saw Jim reach over and give the child's ears an extra pinch for parting measure. Springing back, he called:

"Jim, you big coward, to hurt a boy too little to hurt back! I've stood all that I can from you today, and taken more of your insulting language than I will ever take again!"

Not one saw Elder Lowrey at a back barn door, in his hand a large black-snake whip which he had picked up out of its place and had not yet hung away. What he saw was Eck turning back to address his elder brother fiercely, and next springing upon him and bearing him to the ground, holding him there, and raining blows, as he thought, on his head. What he heard, as he hurried to the scene, was Eck saying: "I'll never let you up! I'll never let you up!" He missed the ending—"Until you promise not to touch Willie's ears again."

Elder Lowrey was an old man, but a strong one, and tho Willie screamed to Eck that grandfather was coming with the blacksnake, the boy missed the warning, and now, to his surprise, cut after cut from the stinging lash was laid across his back and shoulders.

As he looked up to see what was hurting him, Jim rolled from under him, and rising, coolly brushed his clothes, smiling as tho he were pleased to see his brother get the thing he knew secretly, if he knew anything, that he alone deserved.

Elder Lowrey was breathing short when he was thru, but not so much from exertion as horror that these brothers he had admonished so carefully, especially this one—for as yet he had no blame for Jim—had been caught fighting. To the old man this was a heinous thing.

"Cain and Abel! Brothers fighting! Go to the house!" he ordered.

CHAPTER IV.

ECK LEAVES HOME.

STEPMOTHER SUE, facing the barn from her kitchen door, saw the punishment meted out to Eck. Her usual placid manner deserted her, even before she saw her own child running toward her. She opened her arms, crying: "Why,

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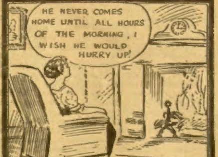
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Willie, Willie! What has happened?"

Elder Lowrey, tho stern, seldom whipped these boys, and Willie had never so much as been threatened. No wonder the child was horrified over the flogging given Eck.

"Grandfather whipped Eck, and called him Cain!" he sobbed out upon his mother's shoulder. "He hadn't done a thing only told Jim if he didn't quit pinchin' my ears he just would do something. He put his hand on Jim's shoulder to push him away from me, and Jim slapped him. I saw it all, mother. Eck just pushed Jim over easy, and held him down, trying to make him promise not to pinch my poor ears any more. Eck never hit him. Oh, my head, my head!"

"There, there!" His mother soothed him as if he were a baby. "You should not have worked today with such a headache. Be quiet. Eck is big and strong. Grandfather could not hurt him very bad."

By the sudden whitening of his face she realized that Willie was sick unto fainting, and turning to Elder Lowrey, now coming into the kitchen, she said:

"The supper is all upon the table. Wait upon yourself. I must look after this sick child."

Had not his mind been preoccupied with its own fancied disgrace and trouble, Elder Lowrey would have noticed the new coldness and reproof in the tone of his daughter-in-law.

His head was bowed as the three boys came in to their supper. Still bowed, he asked the blessing, his trouble showing in his quivering voice as well as in his face. James came in, smiling in his careless way, but there was none to notice this, and he presently dropped his independent air. The supper, always frugal and well-cooked, was scarcely touched; even Ralph, usually a hearty eater, partaking sparingly, while Eck merely drained the glass of cold milk Stepmother Sue had placed by his plate.

Jim knew there would be no questions asked while the meal went on, altho there were likely to be such questions asked afterward. He hurried with his supper while the others dallied, then went away to his room, where he hurriedly dressed, and by a side door made his exit, taking across the fields on foot to the town, having that morning asked permission of his grandfather to go. He did not consider it necessary to ask a second time, and he wanted to be gone when the trial, as he termed it, took place, feeling that as he had heretofore been enabled to lead his grandfather to think he was never the aggressor in these boyish troubles, he would certainly not be blamed in this instance.

Stepmother Sue remained until late in a quiet room with her sick son, grandfather sat reading his Bible in a preoccupied manner, and Eck, followed by Ralph, slipped early upstairs to their room.

"This is the time I expect to tell grandfather some things on Jim," began Ralph, with a troubled look into his brother's face, for he did not understand the expression settling there. "It has gone far enough."

"It will do no good. He will not believe you. To him I am all that is low and mean. I am Cain," was the low reply, stubbornly inflected.

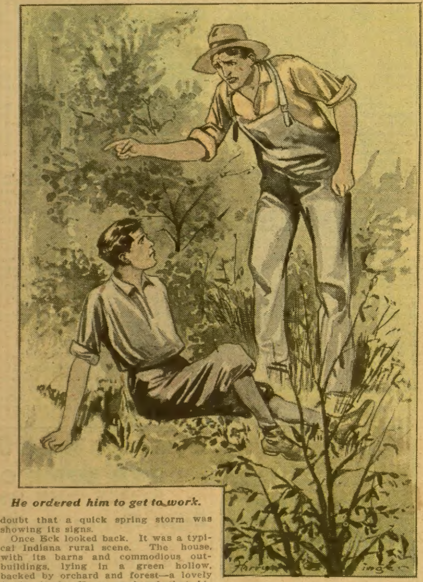
"Yes, it will. Grandfather has just got to be made to understand that the older Jim gets the more overbearing he gets, and he has got to be taken down."

"Never mind bothering about it," ordered Eck, now stepping out of one of the front windows to an upper veranda.

Ralph knew when he lay down in his bed that Eck was still on this veranda, and once afterward he sleepily realized that Eck was moving about in the room, but this was all. He did not see him pack his few clothes in an old valise belonging to no one in particular, nor see him slip down a veranda post to the ground below.

There was nothing related to Cain in the heart of Alexander Lowrey. He would not have hurt his brother Jim under greater provocation. He felt nothing of hatred for his grandfather, tho the welts from the whipping still smarted. He had that feeling, however, of wanting to quit forever the sight of the place where he was not appreciated. It was shutting out his love just now for Ralph, Willie and Stepmother Sue, who always had shown him she had his welfare at heart.

The moon rose high in a clear sky, but back of it appeared a line of dark in the east, and from the west zigzag lightning was lapping up tongues of fire far in the western horizon. There was no doubt that a quick spring storm was showing its signs.



He ordered him to get to work.

Once Eck looked back. It was a typical Indiana rural scene. The house, with its barns and commodious outbuildings, lying in a green hollow, backed by orchard and forest—a lovely fertile land. He remembered that his grandfather always voiced the wish for the land to remain long in the name of Lowrey, for it had so borne the name since redeemed from the Indians.

His great-grandfather had traded with a Shawhee Indian for the right to this virgin soil, and Eck remembered that his grandfather more than once had told him of the visits paid to his father by the great Tecumseh, his triplet brother, the Prophet, and Tecumseh's other triplet brother, who had never become great, merely contenting himself with living the simple life of roaming the Wabash, hunting and fishing.

But the boy soon realized that the longer he looked back, the sooner he would weaken and not run away.

He was making for a railroad crossing across the country. Near this crossing lived an old carpenter who owned a little home of his own, who had a little money earned by his own industry, and was a great friend of Elder Lowrey's. His name was Joshua Beechmere.

Relative, as far as Joshua now could name, he had none. Once he had had a son. Twenty years ago he had lost him out West somewhere. He had long searched for this son, whose name was Douglas. Ten years before he had drifted along the Wabash, in search of that name. The search had availed him nothing. Eck did not know what had caused Joshua to stop and settle here, giving up the search, but at all events he had remained.

When a small boy, Eck often told Joshua that some day he would go in search of his son. He had long forgotten the childish promise. Tonight it came back to him, and with new meaning. He was going to Joshua, first, because he must borrow a little money that he would not ask his grandfather for, had he known of his going. Second, he wanted some directions.

At the first rap of Eck's knuckles on the door, Joshua wakened. Soon he was quietly listening to Eck's story, tho with distressed wags of his gray head. When the tale was told, his listener said all he could to dissuade Eck from running off in this way and in this angry mood. He carefully insisted that, while the boy's grandfather had perhaps acted hastily, he had meant it for the best. He pointed out the long years of care they had received from this man who had been parent and grandparent, to all of which Eck gave full assent, but still stubbornly declared that he was justified in leaving now before his temper cooled.

"We are better apart, Jim and I, and my going will take lots of trouble from off grandfather's mind, for he distrusts me, and expects me any minute to bring disgrace upon him," he stoutly reiterated.

When he had said all he could, Joshua Beechmere added, with a sigh:

"Alex, you are not going about this in the right way. You should demand justice of your grandfather by letting him know something of the nature of James' dealings with his brothers; but if you will not, then I can say no more. Let me see, you would like to borrow, say, fifty dollars from me, which you will not spend unless needed, and for which you will give me an order on your grandfather, who will pay me back, taking it out of the money he is holding for you and which was left you by your own father. Well, boy, I can give you more, and I think you should take it.

"It's a hard task you put on me, keeping your whereabouts from your grandfather, lest he follow you, and I'm not going to promise to do so. I know the trouble of having a boy leave home. Ah, me!"

"That's the story I want you to tell me again, for I am going to work back over the old ways." Eck spoke firmly. He had now an object in going. He was not merely running away because he was angry.

"It is brief," began Joshua. "The mother of Douglas died when he was a baby. I kept him with me, always, then. When he was about 12, I married my second wife. She was a good wife to me, and I thought she was good to the boy. I was mistaken. Thinking at last that I cared nothing for him, because I did not try to know how mean she was to him, he ran away and went up into Montana. This was from Sioux City. He wrote back to me, but never came back, tho I went to see him.

"It was when Doug was about 20 years old that my wife began ailing, and begged to be taken to some healing springs in the South. I wrote to Douglas where we were going, and gave him good directions. The letter never reached him. As near as I can now figure it out, at that very time he was leaving his place in Montana to go Northwest somewhere, and must have written to tell me where, but left no address with his last employer. His letter, like mine, was destroyed by some means. It was common to lose letters in those days. I wrote again and again to that place in Montana. They could tell me nothing of my boy. I sent back to Sioux City. I could not find that any letters from Doug had come here for me. If they had, the clerk said they had been forwarded to me where I ordered. If they were, then some one by my name or something like it got the letters, and never bothered to put them back in the office.

"It was shortly afterward, at these springs, that I lost my wife, and I buried her there. Then I started out to look up Douglas. I never found him."

He gave Eck the money asked for, wrote out a few directions and names, shaking his head dumbly all the while, and took the letter Eck wrote to his grandfather, saying no more, tho the boy could tell he was choking back tears.

The storm was coming fast, bellowing with deep thunder. The railroad crossing was but a few rods from Joshua's house. The coming train would merely slow up before reaching it. In the face of the storm Eck ran to meet it. He clutched at the railing of the first steps. Something caught his breath and loosened his hold. He dropped back, and the train went on without him.

"Good for you, lad!" Joshua called back of him. "Go in daylight upright, aboveboard."

CHAPTER V.

ECK COMES BACK.

EXCEPT for that brief awakening when Eck packed his grip, Ralph Lowrey slept the night thru, the sleep of the tired. The storm did not awaken him, but the first song of the birds in a tree that tapped one of his windows did cause him to roll over sleepily on the opposite pillow. Then he sat up, wondering where Eck had gone, for the pillow and his side of the bed were unruffled.

Hastily he dressed and went to the barn. Jim was there ahead of him.

"Seen anything of Eck?" Ralph asked.

"I'm not keeping tab on Eck," growled Jim.

His share, as well as Eck's, of the feeding done, Ralph hurried back to the house. Willie was sobbing. He had discovered the absence of Eck, the old valise and nearly all of Eck's clothes. He was begging his grandfather to go after Eck, while Stepmother Sue was backing him, and with it, something strange for her, blaming her father-in-law for cruelty to the stepson she loved the best, if he must know it.

Elder Lowrey's brow bore a troubled look. "I know I was too hasty," he acknowledged. "I realize it now. But brothers fighting seems dreadful to me." At this Ralph added his voice to the right of the story, and Jim coming in at this minute, his grandfather asked: "What have you to say to this?"

"Nothing more than that Willie and Ralph have given you a highly exaggerated story of yesterday's happenings," Jim began in a cool, lofty manner, to be interrupted by Stepmother Sue, firmly inquiring:

"Are you never going to see that your

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grandson James has the worst of faults, and the trick of hiding them from you, and ever getting some one else into trouble thru them? I cannot have him domineering over my son and abusing him as he did yesterday, and I will not have it! Between Jim and yourself you have driven Alex from home, and without that bright, good-natured boy here, I feel as Willie does about it; I want to go and be where he is."

"It seems that this time, James, you put up a weak defense," his grandfather sternly remarked. "From some things Ralph has just let out, and which I fully believe, your stepmother is right. I have let you easily blind me, but as I am as much if not more to blame in yesterday's mean treatment of Alexander, I will say no more at present to you, except to warn you that I will not stand good for you forcing Willie to work when sick, or any other little boy cruelties you may think quite manly. We will now have our breakfast; then I must set about looking to see where Alex has gone. Why, here is the boy himself, right now," and over the worried countenance of his grandfather there burst such a glad, relieved smile as Eck never remembered to have seen before.

Holding out a glad hand, Elder Lowrey fairly cried: "I ask your pardon, Eck, for what I did yesterday evening. I let my temper lead me, something you know I seldom do. I know I should have talked last night to you. You can never have an idea of what my thoughts were when it came to me that you had run away. I am so glad it is not so."

"I made the start, grandfather. Joshua Beechmere said all he could to keep me from going. I was set to go. I felt that you would never understand that I meant all right. As I made ready to step on the train, something seemed to hit me square and sudden in the face. It was: 'What will folks say of your grandfather when you are gone? They will exaggerate, and say he beat you, he was always cruel to you, and they will look down upon him for driving you away.' I never could stand it to have them say that about as good a man as you, and so I came back, but not to——"

A scornful little sniff stopped Eck. It came from Jim. He was muttering something to Ralph about "Homesick, that was all." His grandfather heard and gave him a reproving look. He believed Eck, for it was that very thing—the severe blame of outsiders—that had mingled with his regret over losing Eck.

Willie, his headache gone, was dancing about the room unrebuked, he was so glad that Eck had not run away. Ralph was smiling all over his face, and Stepmother Sue hovered near, wanting to know what specially good things he wanted for his breakfast.

It was hard to say now, but Eck said it: "I have not come back to stay. I was not going in just the manner I started to go, but just the same I am going. I'm not wanted here, really, and——"

Amidst protests from all but Jim, and a blank look from his grandfather, Eck stopped short. He was glad that he did, for it was on the end of his tongue to say: "I am going in search of Douglas Beechmere."

What if he had said it? He shuddered to think of the look of scorn it would have brought to the face of his brother Jim, who would so soon spread it in some new ridiculous way among all the other boys. He, a mere boy, presuming to go in search of a person unheard of in twenty years! Why, even Stepmother Sue, who thought him a resourceful boy for his age, would smile at his doubtful idea.

"We will talk about your desire to go when we are alone, son," his grandfather quite softly observed.

In fact, Eck could not but wonder at this new softness for him in his grandfather's voice. He could not know how his grandfather had suffered at the thought of his own unfair action of the evening before, nor of the shame to follow it in his heart when he learned how Eck had met it.

When they were alone Eck's grandfather could scarcely believe his ears when he finally realized how determined Eck was upon going, and as fully determined to get his consent to let him go, to at least make the start. In the conversation Eck could not but let out, as a secret now, how strongly the wish to look for Joshua's son had taken him in its clutch.

"Why, Alex! How foolish!" his grandfather exclaimed. "Joshua searched for ten years. He advertised in nearly every paper in the land. He even spent money on some detective agencies. A boy like you! What plans have you?"

"None whatever, except to work over the old grounds. Sometimes, I've read, these are the grounds where at last you find the missing clew. Why, I've heard that a man might be lost to you for years, and yet, maybe, be living all this time next street to you, or next county."

"I never heard that, but no doubt there might be such an exceptional case, tho I'm sure it could not happen if both parties searched for the other, as I would judge would have been the case in this instance. My idea is, and so did Joshua conclude, that at the very beginning Douglas Beechmere died. He went up into British Columbia, to the gold-mining region. That country then was a vast, wild region, filled with treacherous tribes of Indians and forests where one could easily be lost or devoured by wolves or other wild animals. Then there were unfordable rivers, vast precipices—a thousand dangers.

"It was thru that land Joshua set detectives to work, as far as he could afford. They never found one clew to the missing boy. They finally impressed it upon the father that Douglas was dead."

As his grandfather talked of these wild regions he was but adding to his grandson's desire to be off to them. At last Elder Lowrey said solemnly:

"Alex, you are anxious to be away because you feel that some of my elder children resent my keeping you with me. I am ashamed to know they do, for my keeping you with me has been a work of love as well as duty. This is my home, and I shall do as I please with it. I helped all to good homes. Not one but now has plenty. Therefore I feel free to do as I please with this. It is secured in such a manner that not only all of you boys, as long as you need a home, will find it here, but it is secured the same for your Stepmother Sue. I am getting old, and may die any time, but my death will not mean the sale and breaking up of this home. No, no! It is to be a refuge for you boys always, and your good stepmother. Remember that, wherever you fare. But, Alex, I do not like a rolling stone."

Eck was touched at the quiver in the elderly man's voice.

"Never do you fear, grandfather, that I will become a rolling stone. Let me go, and I will never forget this is my home, and when you call for me to come, that you need me, I will come."

Eck won his wish from his grandfather, and he agreed to give him the emergency fifty dollars out of the money due him at his majority.

Eck wanted no more. He would work his way, he declared. Openly he now made preparations to go, tho his family, even to Jim, who sneered it, thought it foolish for one so young.

"Maybe it is," was all Eck would answer, "but just the same, I'm going."

At the depot, Donald McComb came pushing up to him.

"Eck," he said, "why didn't you tell me? I want to take my foot in my hand and travel."

"How about your folks, Don? Haven't they ambitions for you in other ways?"

"Sure, but there are two boys older than I am that they can work on in that line yet a while. Mine can wait, or let me work them out myself. Write to me, Eck."

This interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

He Insisted.

Just as a young lady entered one of our pay-as-you-enter cars an old gentleman sitting at the other end got up from his seat.

"Oh, no, really I couldn't think——" said the blushing maiden.

"But, madam——" interrupted the old gentleman.

"No, not on any account; I should feel so terribly selfish and——" expostulated the damsel, as she waved the courteous passenger back to his seat.

"I really must insist on——" continued the old gentleman, rapidly growing purple in the face.

"I really don't mind a little bit, and in fact I——" said "beauty," with the sweetest of smiles.

"Can't you see, madam, that——" said the old gentleman, irascibly.

"It's very charming of you, but really, I can just as well stand," the young lady said firmly, as she proceeded to "straphang."

"You are perfectly at liberty to do just as you like about that, miss," said the old gentleman, advancing toward the door, "but I want to get out."

* * *

The Difference.

Men who can turn their hands to any sort of job that needs doing are very useful as husbands. Mr. Pickles was one of these useful gentlemen. His amiable wife once asked him to hang a picture she had purchased for the parlor, and he said that he would do it "in a jiffy."

"You just get me the cord and a picture hook," he said to his wife, "and tell the servant girl to run down into the cellar and bring up the stepladder and carry it into the parlor, and where's those two little screw thingamajigs that go into the back of the frame at the sides to put the cord thru? Look them up for me; and I shall require the gimlet to bore a little hole for the screws. Somebody get the gimlet, or maybe I can drive them in with a hammer. Johnny, you run down into the cellar and get the hammer. Perhaps a chair would be better than the stepladder. Somebody go out into the kitchen and get me a chair. I don't want to stand on one of the parlor chairs. Got that cord? Just measure off about the right length and fasten it to those little things at the side.

"There, now; there's your picture hung up, and no fuss about it. The difference between us men and you women is that, when we have anything to do, we do it, and don't talk all day about it."

* * *

She Indorsed It.

"I want to get this check cashed," said the young wife to the paying teller at the bank.

"Yes, madam; you must indorse it, tho."

"Why, my husband sent it to me. He is away on business."

"Yes, madam. But just indorse it. Sign it on the back, please, and your husband will know we paid it to you."

She went to the desk and in a couple of minutes came back with the check indorsed:

"Your loving wife, Edith."

* * *

A Back Number.

The old baby crawled along the floor until he came to the side of the crib. Then he pulled himself up until he stood on his feet and looked over and down on the new baby.

"Just arrived?" he said.

"Yes."

"Well, let me give you a piece of advice. I've been here a couple of months and know the whole game. Don't believe anything you hear, kick off the clothes as much as you can, scream loudly at all hours of the night and make trouble galore for everybody. You are surrounded by criminals. It's the only way you can get even. My boy, you're up against it—hard."

The new baby wriggled a toe and looked bored.

"Keep your advice to yourself," he replied. "You're dotty. By the latest dictum of psychology, the doctrine of nonresistance is the only thing to practice. Go off and mumble to yourself. You belong to a past generation. You're a back number."

Twisting over calmly, he murmured to himself:

"What airs these ancient totterers give themselves!"—Life.

* * *

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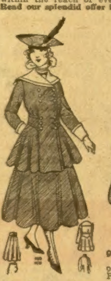
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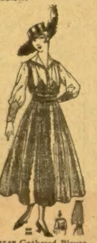
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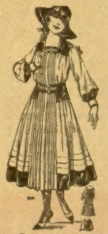
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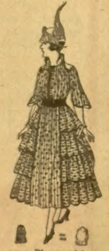
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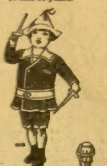
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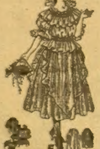
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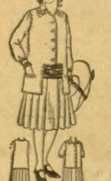
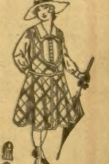

8668 Girl's Dress, 10 to 14 years.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We want every home lover in America to feel that his credit is good with us. We might not sell knick-knacks to all men on credit. But a man who wants furnishings for a home is welcome to credit here. It does not matter what he has or earns.

We have given this credit to millions of homes, and done it for 50 years. Now we give it without asking, and without any red tape. Not even a reference is required.

A Credit Card

Ask for our Dollar Book—our enormous book of bargains. We will send you a Credit Card with it. This card will say that your account is open, ready for your order. Then order when and what you wish and let us charge it to you.

We'll trust you. We shall be so fair with you that you will be fair with us.

Pay as You Can

You can pay as convenient. We allow a year's time, or more, on each bill, without any interest or any extra price.

Send us a little each month. You can furnish a home in this way if you wish by saving a few cents per day.

There is no discount for cash. We gladly open a charge account, and we prefer to sell on credit. You may as well have these easy terms. Millions of others do.

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The prices we quote will amaze you. We buy whole factory outputs. We pick up surplus stocks. We buy for millions, and at prices often under cost.

You will find thousands of articles in our Bargain Book at one-half usual prices. And every price is guaranteed to be the lowest in America for the article we quote.

Pay Nothing for a Month

We ask no customer on our books to pay a penny in advance. We ship all goods on 30 days' approval, subject to return. If you return them for any reason we pay freight both ways.

Our millions of customers, when they buy from us, send nothing with their orders. They pay nothing for a month. They get the goods and try them first, so they can't be disappointed. This applies to anything we sell, to one article or to many. You have a month to decide before buying.

No other concern in our line offers terms like these to customers. We would not dare to, as you know, if we did not undersell all others.

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When we send goods on approval—without any money down—we guarantee a saving of 15 to 50 per cent. That means a saving of 30 per cent on the average under any other prices in America.

If we don't show that saving you can send the goods back. We shall lose the sale and the freight both ways. You will not be out one penny.

Your Last Chance

This is your last chance, we believe, to buy home things at the prices we quote today. Since our present stocks were purchased prices have enormously advanced.

Hundreds of home things have advanced 50 per cent. Thousands have gone up 25 and 30 per cent. We can never again hope to buy these things to sell at our present prices.

Whatever new things you want for your home should be purchased now. We shall not advance prices so long as present stocks last. Or so long as our contracts let us buy at present prices. But nearly everything we sell will cost us very much more when we make new purchases.

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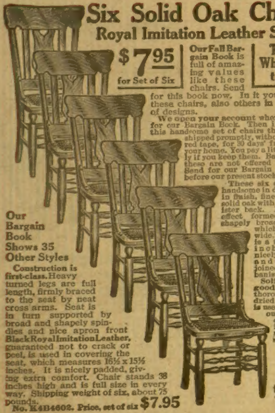
A Year or More on Every Bill

Six Solid Oak Chairs

Royal Imitation Leather Seats



$7.95 for Set of Six

Take a Whole Year to Pay

Our Fall Bargain Book is full of amazing values like these chairs. Send for this book now. In it you will find these chairs, also others in a variety of designs.

We open your account when you send for our Bargain Book. Then if you want this handsome set of chairs they will be shipped promptly, without delay or red tape, for 30 days' free trial in your home. You pay a little monthly if you keep them. Bargains like these are not offered elsewhere. Send for our Bargain Book now, before our present stocks are gone.

These six chairs are handsome in design, rich in finish, finely made of solid oak with triple banister back. Notice the effect formed by the shapely broad banister, which is 6 inches wide. Then there is a top slat 4½ inches wide, nicely shaped and firmly joined to the banister.

Solid oak of good quality, thoroughly kiln dried and tested, is used throughout in these chairs, finished in a rich golden shade.

Our Bargain Book Shows 35 Other Styles

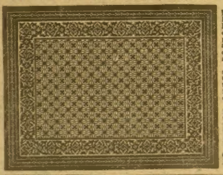
Construction is first-class. Heavy turned legs are full length, firmly braced to the seat by neat cross arms. Seat is in turn supported by broad and shapely spindles and nice apron front. Black Royal Imitation Leather, guaranteed not to crack or peel, is used in covering the seat, which measures 16½ x 15½ inches. It is nicely padded, giving extra comfort. Chair stands 38 inches high and is full size in every way. Shipping weight of six, about 75 pounds.

No. K4B4602. Price, set of six **$7.95**

30 Days to Try Them

Famous Congoleum Rug

AT LOWEST CASH PRICE, WITH A YEAR TO PAY



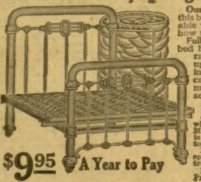
Here is the very latest thing for the home. Can be used in kitchen, dining room or bedroom. Is waterproof. Wears better than linoleum or oilcloth. Looks just like a rug.

Our Bargain Book shows this handsome Congoleum rug and tells you how to get it in your home for 30 days' free trial.

The pattern is very pretty, brought out in a brown ground with ecru, light and dark brown. Figured border is very handsome. Notice inside panel effect.

No. K4C7048. Size 6 by 9 feet. Price........ **$3.90**

Fine Steel Bed, Spring and Mattress



Our Fall Bargain Book shows this bed outfit and other remarkable values, too. It tells you how to order.

Full continuous design steel bed has corner posts and top rails 1 1-16 inch thick. Five upper filling rods are 5-16 inch thick. Notice circular casting in center. Bed is made of good quality Bessemer steel. Bed stands 57½ inches high at head and 38½ inches high at foot. Can be furnished in either white enamel or famous Vernis Martin all-gold finish. Spring is extra strong link fabric; cotton top mattress is well made.

No. K4B6008. Price, bed, spring and mattress.................. **$9.95**

No. K4B6009. Price, bed only........ **4.95**

$9.95 **A Year to Pay**

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Our mammoth Fall Bargain Book pictures 5175 home things, many in actual colors. You never saw such an interesting book. It costs us with the mailing $1 per copy, but we send it free to home lovers.

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